Commentary

Volume Fifty, Number One, July 1970

Urban Civilization & Its Discontents

Irving Kristol

On the Passage of Time
Peter Berlinrut

Agit-Prop & the Rosenbergs
Allen Weinstein

The Radicalized Professor
Dorothy Rabinowitz

Can Anti-Semitism Be Measured?
Lucy S. Dawidowicz

The Shalit Case
Robert Alter

"Issues"
Norman Podhoretz

Books in Review:
David Donald
Richard Schickel
Robert Ackerman
James R. Adams
Martin Peretz

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE ONE DOLLAR

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Before a shot was fired in '76, we were already a Tradition.

Wherever you travel, look for this label. It's your assurance of world-renowned quality.

The White Horse Cellar
Estab 1742

White Horse Scotch.

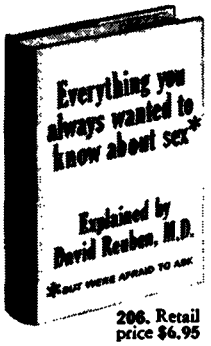
The difference between ordinary and legendary.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CATCH UP ON YOUR READING ON YOUR COMING VACATION

through a short trial membership in the BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB®

You simply agree to buy three additional Club Selections or Alternates within a year at special members' prices



206. Retail price **$6.95**

431. THE RISE AND FALL OF THE THIRD REICH *by* WILLIAM L. SHIRER. Maps (Retail price **$15**)

140. THE COMPLETE MEDICAL GUIDE *by* BENJAMIN F. MILLER, M.D. 3rd rev. ed. Illustrated (Retail price **$9.95**)

414. IBERIA: Spanish Travels and Reflections *by* JAMES A. MICHENER Photographs (Retail price **$10**)

260. THE OXFORD DICTIONARY OF QUOTATIONS (Retail price **$11**)

233. THE JOYS OF YIDDISH *by* LEO ROSTEN (Retail price **$10**)

355. THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT *by* WILLIAM MANCHESTER Charts and maps (Retail price **$10**)

378. THE UNITED STATES NAVY IN WORLD WAR II *Edited by* S. E. SMITH Illus. (Ret. price **$12.50**)

THESE THREE BOOKS COUNT AS ONE CHOICE

174. *IN SOMEONE'S SHADOW, LISTEN TO THE WARM, STANYAN STREET & OTHER SORROWS* by ROD MC KUEN (Retail prices total **$13.50**)

127. THE POETRY OF ROBERT FROST. *Edited by* EDWARD CONNERY LATHEM (Retail price **$10.95**)

101. PRESENT AT THE CREATION: My Years in the State Department *by* DEAN ACHESON Photographs (Retail price **$12.50**)

107. THE WAY THINGS WORK: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Technology (Retail price **$9.95**)

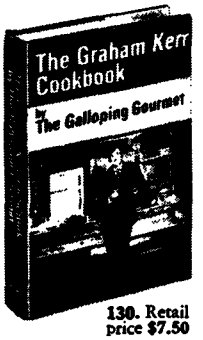
111. ERNEST HEMINGWAY A Life Story *by* CARLOS BAKER. Photographs (Retail price **$10**)

171. THEM *by* JOYCE CAROL OATES (Retail price **$6.95**)

280. THE AGE OF VOLTAIRE *by* WILL *and* ARIEL DURANT. Illustrated (Retail price **$15**)

513. LOSING BATTLES *by* EUDORA WELTY (Retail price **$7.95**)

241. THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER *by* GAY TALESE. Photos (Retail price **$10**)



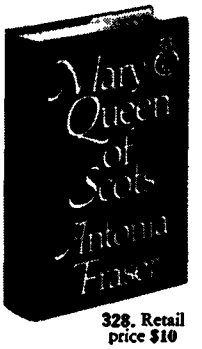
130. Retail price **$7.50**

THESE TWO BOOKS COUNT AS ONE CHOICE

200. HOW CHILDREN LEARN *and* HOW CHILDREN FAIL *by* JOHN HOLT (Retail prices total **$9.45**)

319. THE COLLAPSE OF THE THIRD REPUBLIC: An Inquiry into the Fall of France in 1940 *by* WILLIAM L. SHIRER. Maps (Retail price **$12.50**)

133. THE HUMAN ZOO *by* DESMOND MORRIS (Retail price **$6.95**)



328. Retail price **$10**

250. THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN *by* MICHAEL CRICHTON (Retail price **$5.95**)

368. WELLINGTON: The Years of the Sword *by* ELIZABETH LONGFORD. Illustrated (Retail price **$10**)

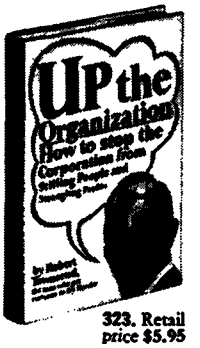
381. ROUSSEAU AND REVOLUTION *by* WILL *and* ARIEL DURANT. Illustrated (Retail price **$15**)

504. THE BODY HAS A HEAD *by* GUSTAV ECKSTEIN (Retail price **$12.50**)

450. THE KEY TO FEMININE RESPONSE IN MARRIAGE *by* RONALD DEUTSCH Illustrated (Retail price **$5.95**)

304. THE AMERICANS *by* J. C. FURNAS. Illus. (Retail price **$12.95**)

353. THE N.Y. TIMES COMPLETE MANUAL OF HOME REPAIR *by* BERNARD GLADSTONE Illustrated (Retail price **$7.95**)



323. Retail price **$5.95**

484. THE 900 DAYS The Siege of Leningrad *by* HARRISON E. SALISBURY Photographs (Retail price **$10**)

259. JENNIE: The Life of Lady Randolph Churchill *by* RALPH G. MARTIN Photographs (Retail price **$8.95**)

148. MAKING THINGS GROW *by* THALASSA CRUSO Illustrated (Retail price **$6.95**)

201. Retail price **$6.95**

116. DISRAELI *by* ROBERT BLAKE. Illustrated (Retail price **$12.50**)

103. THE NEW ROGET'S THESAURUS IN DICTIONARY FORM *Edited by* NORMAN LEWIS (Retail price **$5.50**)

357. TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT *by* GRAHAM GREENE (Retail price **$5.95**)

295. A BEGGAR IN JERUSALEM *by* ELIE WIESEL (Retail price **$5.95**)

486. Retail price **$6.95**

283. HUEY LONG *by* T. HARRY WILLIAMS Photographs (Retail price **$12.50**)

102. DOCTOR ZHIVAGO *by* BORIS PASTERNAK (Retail price **$5.95**)

191. THE ANDERSON TAPES *by* LAWRENCE SANDERS (Retail price **$5.95**)

234. THE OXFORD HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE *by* SAMUEL ELIOT MORISON. Illustrated (Retail price **$15**)

161. JOY OF COOKING *by* IRMA S. ROMBAUER *and* MARION R. BECKER Illustrated (Retail price **$6.95**)

154. THE JEWISH MYSTIQUE *by* ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG (Retail price **$5.95**)

198. CREWEL EMBROIDERY *by* ERICA WILSON Illustrated (Retail price **$7.50**)

505. PLUCHE OR THE LOVE OF ART *by* JEAN DUTOURD (Retail price **$5.95**)

139. ULYSSES *by* JAMES JOYCE. Unabridged (Retail price **$7.95**)

390. 536 PUZZLES & CURIOUS PROBLEMS *by* HENRY ERNEST DUDENEY. Illustrated (Retail price **$7.95**)

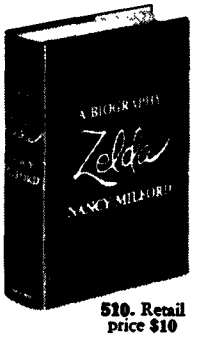
314. I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS *by* MAYA ANGELOU (Retail price **$5.95**)

485. KNOW YOUR ANTIQUES *by* RALPH *and* TERRY KOVEL. Photos (Retail price **$7.50**)

329. THE HISTORY OF PSYCHIATRY *by* F. G. ALEXANDER, M.D. *and* S. T. SELESNICK, M.D. Illustrated (Ret. price **$11.95**)

204. THE THREE DAUGHTERS OF MADAME LIANG *by* PEARL S. BUCK (Retail price **$6.95**)

333. AMERICA'S KNITTING BOOK *by* GERTRUDE TAYLOR. Illus. (Retail price **$9.95**)



510. Retail price **$10**

580. MASTERING THE ART OF FRENCH COOKING *by* JULIA CHILD, LOUISETTE BERTHOLLE, SIMONE BECK Illus. (Retail price **$10**)

A LIBRARY-BUILDING PLAN EVERY READING FAMILY SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

THE EXPERIMENTAL MEMBERSHIP suggested here will prove, *by your own actual experience*, how effectually membership in the Book-of-the-Month Club can keep you from missing books you fully intend to read.

As long as you remain a member, you will receive, each month, the Book-of-the-Month Club *News*, which describes the monthly Selection, as well as scores of other important books, most of which are available at substantial discounts—up to 40% on more expensive volumes. All of these books are **identical in every respect to the publishers' editions.** There is no obligation to purchase any particular volume, and a convenient instruction form is provided each month so that instead of the Selection you may order any Alternate—or no book at all, if you wish.

If you continue after this experimental membership, you will earn, *for every Book-of-the-Month Club Selection or Alternate you buy*, a Book-Dividend Credit. Each Credit, upon payment of a nominal sum, often only **$1.00 or $1.50**—somewhat more for unusually expensive volumes or sets—will entitle you to a Book-Dividend® which you may choose from over 100 fine library volumes available over the year. This unique library-building system, together with the sizable discounts on Selections and Alternates, enables members to save **over 60%** of what they would otherwise have to pay for books they are eager to read.

BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB, INC.
280 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017 **A33-7**

Please enroll me as a member of the Book-of-the-Month Club and send me the three volumes whose numbers I have indicated in boxes below, billing me $1.00 for all three volumes. I agree to purchase at least three additional monthly Selections or Alternates during the first year I am a member, paying special members' prices. My membership is cancelable any time after buying these three books. A postage and handling charge is added to all book shipments.

INDICATE BY NUMBER THE THREE BOOKS YOU WANT ☐ ☐ ☐

MR. / MRS. / MISS .....
(Please print plainly)

Address..... **0-55**

City & State..... *Zip*.....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary

VOLUME 50 NUMBER 1 *JULY 1970*

Articles 29 Urban Civilization & Its Discontents *Irving Kristol*

36 Can Anti-Semitism Be Measured? *Lucy S. Dawidowicz*

44 On the Passage of Time *Peter Berlinrut*

In the Community 55 The Shalit Case *Robert Alter*

Observations 62 The Radicalized Professor: A Portrait *Dorothy Rabinowitz*

Theater 18 Agit-Prop & the Rosenbergs *Allen Weinstein*

Issues 27 First Things, and Last *Norman Podhoretz*

Letters 6 from *Robert Lekachman, Meyer Liben, Henry M. Pachter, John P. Sisk, Henriette Boas,* and others

Books in Review 67 The South and the Nation, by Pat Watters *David Donald*

68 The British Folklorists, by Richard M. Dorson; Peasant Customs and Savage Myths, edited by Richard M. Dorson *Robert Ackerman*

70 The Freudian Left, by Paul Robinson *Martin Peretz*

73 Why Men Rebel, by Ted Robert Gurr *James R. Adams*

76 Vital Parts, by Thomas Berger *Richard Schickel*

Editor: Norman Podhoretz
Executive Editor: Neal Kozodoy
Managing Editor: Marion Magid
Associate Editors: Brenda Brown, Maier Deshell
Contributing Editors: Milton Himmelfarb, George Lichtheim
Editorial Secretary: Susan Zimmerman
General Manager: Martin Edelston
Circulation Manager: Ronald Greene
Production Manager: Bruce Lodi
Typography: Ira Teichberg
Cover: The Drawing Board, Inc.

COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $1.00; $10 a year; 3 years $27; 5 years $39.50—Add $1.50 per year for foreign postage charge—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Copyright © 1970 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions—Indexed in Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, and Index to Jewish Periodicals—*Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.*

EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How free can a checking account be?

What do we mean by "free?"

We mean that you can write all the checks you please, free.

We mean that we don't charge you for deposits.

We mean that you pay nothing for monthly statements.

We mean there is no charge for imprinting your name on your checks.

We mean we even pay postage so you can do all your banking by mail, free.

We also mean that you only have to keep a minimum average collected monthly balance of $200.*

How free can a checking account be?

At the bank you feel related to, it's more free than anywhere else.

A service charge of $3. will be made only for each month your average collected balance falls below $200, and you can still write all the checks you please.

IDB

Israel Discount Bank Limited

Main New York office: 511 Fifth Avenue / Branch: 1350 Broadway, New York / TN 7-1080

Total assets exceed $900,000,000.

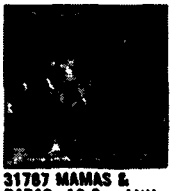
Licensed by the New York State Banking Dept.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The greatest record and tape offer in our history... **FOR EVERYONE—EVEN THOSE**

Free... ANY 3 STEREO LP's or

WITH ABSOLUTELY NO OBLIGATION



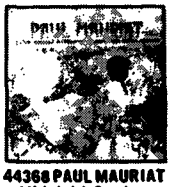
31787 MAMAS & PAPAS—16 Great Hits
Dunh LP, 8TR, CASS

42665 CROSBY, STILLS & NASH
Atlan LP, 8TR, CASS,

33077 JOAN BAEZ—One Day At A Time
Vangu LP, 8TR, CASS

42673 LED ZEPPELIN II
Atlan LP, 8TR

49706 B.B. KING—Completely Well
Blues LP, 8TR, CASS



44368 PAUL MAURIAT—Midnight Cowboy
Phil LP, 8TR, CASS

30602 JACKSON FIVE—I Want You Back
Motow LP, 8TR, CASS

42693 KING CRIMSON
Atlan LP, 8TR

33032 IAN & SYLVIA—Nashville
Vangu LP, 8TR, CASS

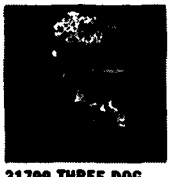
17317 CASALS—Plays Beethoven
Phil LP

34525 HELLO DOLLY
TwenCen LP, 8TR, CASS

42638 HERBIE MANN
Underground Memphis
Atlan LP, 8TR, CASS

33495 BLIND FAITH
Atco LP, 8TR, CASS

33252 WES MONTGOMERY—Best River
LP, 8TR, CASS



31799 THREE DOG NIGHT—It Ain't Easy
Dunh LP, 8TR, CASS

15116 HANDEL—Jephtha
Vangu LP (3 records)

17263 GREGORIAN CHANT
Phili LP

44365 JACQUES BREL—If You Go Away
Phili LP

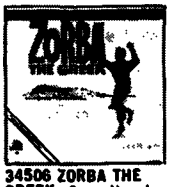
33486 CREAM—Best of Cream
Atco LP, 8TR

42577 RASCALS-Great Hits Time Peace
Atlan LP, 8TR, CASS

44373 HAIR: French Original Cast
Phil LP

44309 BEST OF NINA SIMONE
Phili LP

67503 SMITH—Minus—Plus
Dunhi LP, 8TR, CASS



34506 ZORBA THE GREEK—Soundtrack
TwCen LP, 8TR, CASS

33065 JOAN BAEZ—David's Album
Vangu LP, 8TR, CASS

30606 TEMPTATIONS
Psychedelic Shack
Gordy LP, 8TR, CASS

33078 WEAVERS—On Tour
Vangu LP, 8TR, CASS

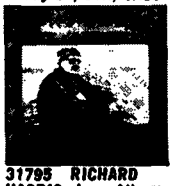
17042 BEETHOVEN: Piano Sonatas/ Richter
Phil LP

33083 COUNTRY JOE & FISH—CJ Fish
Vangu LP, 8TR, CASS

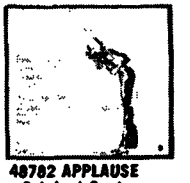
66546 RARE EARTH Get Ready
RarEa LP, 8TR, CASS

44369 MYSTIC MOODS ORCH.Stormy Weekend
Merc LP, 8TR, CASS

17238 BERLIOZ—Te Deum—London Sym.
Phili LP

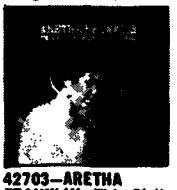


31795 RICHARD HARRIS—Love Album
Dunhi LP, 8TR, CASS



48782 APPLAUSE—Original Cast
ABC LP, 8TR, CASS

33487 BEST OF BEE GEES
Atco LP, 8TR, CASS



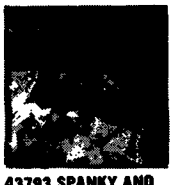
42703—ARETHA FRANKLIN—This Girl's In Love With You
Atlan LP, 8TR, CASS

17049 SIBELIUS—Sym #2 Concertgebouw/Szell
Phili LP, 8TR, CASS

33443 IRON BUTTERFLY—In A Gadda-Da-Vida
Atco LP, 8TR, CASS

31781 THREE DOG NIGHT—Suitable for Framing
Dunhi LP, 8TR, CASS

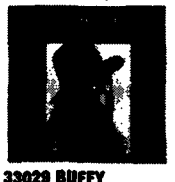
15113 MAHLER—Sym #3 Utah Sym
Vangu LP (2 records)



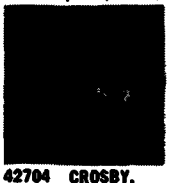
43793 SPANKY AND OUR GANG—Greatest Hits
Mercu LP, 8TR, CASS

32903 PDQ BACH
Vangu LP

17064 MOZART: Sym Nos. 25, 29, 32—Lon. Sym, Davis
Phil LP



33029 BUFFY SAINTE-MARIE—Gonna Be A Country Girl Again
Vangu LP, 8TR, CASS

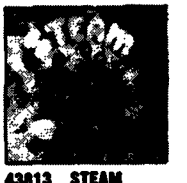


42704 CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG—Deja Vu
Atlan LP, 8TR, CASS

44195 FOUR SEASONS—Gold Vault of Hits
Phili LP, 8TR, CASS

31973 JOHN COLTRANE—Selflessness
Impul LP

31755 STEPPENWOLF
Dunhi LP, 8TR, CASS



43813 STEAM
Mercu LP, 8TR, CASS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PEOPLE WHO SWORE THEY WOULD NEVER JOIN ANOTHER RECORD OR TAPE CLUB!

ANY 1 TAPE Cartridge or Cassette SHOWN HERE Worth up to $20.94 TO BUY ANYTHING EVER!

Yes, take your pick of these great hits right now. Choose any 3 Stereo LP's (worth up to $20.94) or any 1 stereo tape (worth up to $6.98) FREE . . . as your welcome gift from Record Club Of America when you join at the low lifetime membership fee of $5.00. We make this amazing offer to introduce you to the only record and tape club offering guaranteed discounts of 33⅓% to 79% on all labels—with no obligation or commitment to buy anything ever. As a member of this one-of-a-kind club you will be able to order any record or tape commercially available, at savings up to 79%—guaranteed never less than 33⅓%. No automatic shipments, no cards to return. We ship only what you order. Money back guarantee if not satisfied.

See for yourself why over 3¼ million record and tape collectors paid $5 to join Record Club of America when other record or tape clubs would have accepted them free.

Compare Clubs and See	Columbia Record Club (as advertised in Playboy February, 1970)	Capitol Record Club (as advertised in Playboy April 1970)	The RCA Cassette Club (as advertised in Sports Illustrated May 4, 1970)	Columbia Stereo Tape Cartridge Service (as advertised in TV Guide April 25, 1970)	RCA Stereo 8 Tape Club (as advertised in Playboy April 1970)	RECORD CLUB OF AMERICA
CAN YOU CHOOSE FROM ALL LABELS? LP's OR TAPES, INCLUDING CARTRIDGE, CASSETTE AND REEL-TO-REEL TAPES?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES! Choose any LP or tape on any label! No exceptions! Hundreds of different manufacturers including Columbia, RCA, Capitol, Angel, London, etc.
MUST YOU BUY A "MINIMUM" NUMBER OF RECORDS OR TAPES? HOW MANY?	10	12	6	12	6	NONE! No obligations! No yearly quota! Take as many, as few, or none at all if you so decide!
HOW MUCH MUST YOU *SPEND* TO FULFILL YOUR LEGAL OBLIGATION?	$49.80 TO $59.80	$59.76 to $71.76	$35.70 to $41.70	$83.76 to $95.40	$41.70 TO $47.70	ZERO DOLLARS! You don't have to spend a penny because you're not "legally obligated" to buy even a single record or tape!
CAN YOU BUY ANY RECORD OR TAPE YOU WANT AT A DISCOUNT?	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	ALWAYS! You get discounts up to 79% off. Guaranteed never less than 33⅓% off. No exceptions.
DO YOU EVER RECEIVE UNORDERED RECORDS OR TAPES?	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NEVER! There are no cards which you must return. Only the records and tapes you want are sent and only when you ask us to send them.
HOW LONG MUST YOU WAIT FOR SELECTIONS TO ARRIVE?	5 to 6 weeks	5 to 6 weeks	5 to 6 weeks	5 to 6 weeks	5 to 6 weeks	NO LONG WAITS! Your order processed same day received. No shipping on cycle.

TYPICAL "EXTRA DISCOUNT" SALE

Savings of 50% And More From Recent Club Sales . . . Savings up to $3.49 per LP

	Label	List Price	Half Price
Simon & Garfunkel—Bridge Over Troubled Water	Col	5.98	2.99
Joe Cocker	A&M	4.98	2.49
Peter, Paul & Mary— Album 1700	War	4.98	2.49
Herb Alpert—Greatest Hits	A&M	4.98	2.49
Creedence Clearwater Revival—Willy & Poorboys	Fant	4.98	2.49
The Beatles—Let It Be	Apple	6.98	3.49
Hair—Original B'way Cast	RCA	5.98	2.99
Tom Jones—Tom	Parrot	5.98	2.99
Paul McCartney—McCartney	Apple	5.98	2.99
Jose Feliciano—Fireworks	RCA	4.98	2.49
Glen Campbell—Oh Happy Day	Cap	5.98	2.99
Barbra Streisand—Greatest Hits	Col	5.98	2.99
Miles Davis—Bitches Brew	Col	6.98	3.49
Leontyne Price— Verdi Heroines	RCA	6.98	3.49

Your $5.00 membership fee entitles you to buy or offer gift memberships to friends, relatives, neighbors for only $2.50 each, with full privileges. You can split the total between you—the more gift members you get—the more you save! Special Note: gift members do not receive any FREE records or tapes.

40 R2

© 1970 RECORD CLUB OF AMERICA, INC.

AT LAST A RECORD AND TAPE CLUB WITH NO "OBLIGATIONS"—ONLY BENEFITS!

This is the way you want it—the only record and tape club with no strings attached! Ordinary record or tape clubs make you choose from just a few labels—usually their own! They make you buy up to 12 records or tapes a year—usually at list price—to fulfill your obligation. And if you forget to return their monthly card—they send you a record or tape you don't want and a bill for $4.98, $5.98, $6.98 or $7.98! In effect, you may be charged almost double for your records and tapes.

But Record Club of America Ends All That!

We're the largest all-label record and tape club in the world. Choose any LP or tape (cartridges and cassettes) . . . on any label . . . including new releases. No exceptions! Take as many, or as few, or no selections at all if you so decide. Discounts are GUARANTEED AS HIGH AS 79% OFF! You always save at least 33⅓%. You never pay full-price! You get bestsellers for as low as 99¢, plus a small handling and mailing charge.

No Automatic Shipments

With Record Club of America there are no cards which you must return to prevent shipment of unwanted LP's or tapes (which you would have to return at your own expense if you have failed to send written notice not to ship). We send only what you order.

How Can We Break All Record and Tape Club Rules?

We are the only major record and tape club NOT OWNED . . . NOT CONTROLLED . . . NOT SUBSIDIZED by any record or tape manufacturer anywhere. Therefore, we are never obliged by company policy to push any one label, or honor the list price of any manufacturer. Nor are we prevented by distribution commitments, as are other major record or tape clubs, from offering the very newest records and tapes.

Join Record Club of America now and take advantage of this special INTRODUCTORY MEMBERSHIP OFFER. Choose any three LP's or any one tape shown here (worth up to $20.94) and mail coupon with check or money order for $5.00 membership fee (a small handling and mailing charge for your free records or tapes will be sent later). This entitles you to LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP—and you never pay another club fee. You are never obligated to buy another record or tape ever. Your savings have already MORE THAN MADE UP FOR THE NOMINAL MEMBERSHIP FEE.

Look What You Get

- FREE **Lifetime Membership Card**—guarantees you brand new LP's and tapes at discounts up to 79% . . . Never less than ⅓ off.
- FREE **Giant Master LP Catalog**—lists readily available LP's of all labels! Thousands of listings; hundreds of labels.
- FREE **Giant Master Tape Catalog**—*sent on request.* Lists readily available tapes (cartridges and cassettes) on all labels.
- FREE **Disc & Tape Guide**—The Club's own Magazine, and special Club sale announcements which regularly bring you news of just-issued new releases and "extra discount" specials.
- FREE **Any 3 Stereo LP's or any 1 Tape** shown here (worth up to $20.94) with absolutely no obligation to buy anything ever!

Guaranteed Instant Service

All records and tapes ordered from Disc & Tape Guide and special sale announcements are shipped the same day received (orders from the Master Catalogs may take a few days longer). ALL RECORDS AND TAPES GUARANTEED—factory new and completely satisfactory or replacements will be made *without question.*

Money Back Guarantee

If you aren't absolutely delighted with our discounts (up to 79%)—return items within 10 days and membership fee will be refunded AT ONCE! Join over one million budget-wise record and tape collectors now. Mail coupon to: Record Club of America Club Headquarters, York, Pa. 17405

RECORD CLUB OF AMERICA
CLUB HEADQUARTERS
YORK, PENNSYLVANIA 17405 **X797**

Yes—Rush me a lifetime Membership Card, Free Giant Master LP Catalog (check box below if you also wish a Master Tape Catalog) and Disc & Tape Guide at this limited Special Introductory Membership offer. Also send me the 3 FREE LP's or 1 FREE tape which I have indicated below (with a bill for a small mailing and handling charge). I enclose my $5.00 membership fee. (Never another club fee for the rest of my life.) This entitles me to buy any LP's or Tapes at discounts up to 79%, plus a small mailing and handling charge. I am not obligated to buy any records or tapes—no yearly quota. If not completely delighted I may return items above within 10 days for immediate refund of membership fee.

☐ Also send Master Tape Catalog

3 FREE LP'S

☐ ☐ ☐

or 1 FREE TAPE

☐ ☐ 8 track ☐ cassette

Also add_____Gift Memberships at $2.50 each to my request. (Attach separate sheet with names and addresses. Indicate Master Catalog request.)

I enclose $_____covering my $5.00 lifetime membership and any gift memberships at $2.50 each.

☐ CASH ☐ CHECK ☐ MONEY ORDER

Make a check or money order payable to Record Club of America.

Mr.
Mrs.
Miss_____

Address_____

City_____State_____Zip_____

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
Philip E. Hoffman, *President*

The Commentary Publication Committee

Eli M. Black, *Chairman*
Charles D. Breitel
Maxwell Dane
Edward E. Elson
Richard C. Ernst
Maurice Glinert
Sydney M. Kaye
Lewis J. Laventhol
Ned Pines
Frederick P. Rose
David Sher
John Slawson
Roger Sonnabend
Harry Steiner
Alan M. Stroock
Laurence A. Tisch
Ben Touster

Letters from Readers

The Future

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "The Future of Prediction" [March], John P. Sisk has seriously misrepresented the content of my book, *The Prometheus Project*, by characterizing it as an attempt to predict the future. He implies that I have described a utopia, which he rejects as unfit for human occupation, and goes on to state that in doing so, I am ". . . determined to make the world over in [my] own over-simplified terms, willfully rejecting interests and values incompatible with [my] own assumptions." Both of these assertions involve a distortion of my purposes so severe as to amount to attributing to me the opposite of what I actually said.

Briefly, the thesis of *The Prometheus Project* is that technological advances, especially in biology, are on the point of enabling us to change ourselves and our societies much more fundamentally than has ever occurred in recorded history. I do not believe, as Mr. Sisk implies, that these new technological possibilities will necessarily "work for the general welfare in the long run." It is because I think that they may not do so that I was impelled to write *The Prometheus Project*. I pointed out in the book that the long-term effects of these new possibilities will depend largely on whether we implement them by conscious planning or by chance actions. If we allow major technological changes to occur at random, without forethought, it is very likely that the outcome will be unsatisfactory. . . . I proposed, therefore, that we try, before making the changes, to choose what we want man and society to be. . . . It is the effort to choose our future through a consensus on the long-range goals of the human race that I called the Prometheus Project. My book is devoted to this thesis rather than to the prediction or advocacy of a utopia.

In one section of the book, I described some possible technological advances, in order to indicate what some of our options might be and what problems they might bring about. These were not presented as predictions, but rather as descriptions of the directions which science is actually taking. Still less were they presented as desirable changes. . . .

Mr. Sisk's main point seems to be that we should keep in mind that predictions may be wrong. Presumably keeping this in mind, Mr. Sisk, in his analogy of technology to *Macbeth*, accepts the view of fatalists and other frightened children that our plans are doomed to failure by factors beyond our understanding. . . . In fact, however, we are much more likely to end up badly through a lack of planning than through factors unforeseen in our plans. The criticism that really can be made of most predictions is that they treat the future as something fixed, and not subject to our influence. In this sense Mr. Sisk is right in relating some future predictions to astrology, or to tea-leaf reading. But the alternative to such prediction is not to accept blindly those attitudes of the ancient Greeks or Christians which were suitable to a situation in which human influence over the natural world was minimal. It is, rather, to accept the challenge of determining our own future as well as we are able, in the belief that the use of our minds can do better for us than the blind chance which has been responsible for the world until now.

Finally, I can only wonder whether Mr. Sisk read the inside of my book more carefully than he read the cover, on which my name is correctly spelled.

GERALD FEINBERG
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The future is indeed getting to be a sizable business, as John P. Sisk notes. Since his information was collected, the World Future Society has grown to about 5,000 members located in some 50 countries. . . . We have chapters and other local groups in many cities, from Hartford to Los Angeles, and expect to establish our first chapters outside the U.S. this year. . . .

EDWARD S. CORNISH
World Future Society
Washington, D.C.

MR. SISK writes:

I must assure Mr. Feinberg that I read his book with more attention than might be suggested by the misspelling of his name, which

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIG. 1. *The Rover* **BABY V-8**

IF you've driven in the city lately, you may already agree that this (Fig. 2) is as big as any car ought to be. What you may not realize is that there was never a rational excuse for them to be any bigger.

A twenty-foot-long car may have been a mark of prestige, once, but nowadays anybody endeavoring to drive and park one is more likely to be a fig-

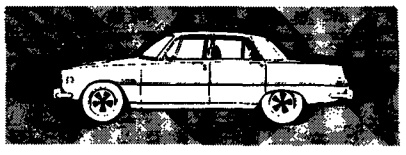


FIG. 2. *The $5,398* Baby V-8 with a comparably priced one of Theirs, in proportion.*

ure of fun. For others. Not much fun in it for himself. And, prestige aside, what are the supposed advantages of a big luxury V-8?

A ROOMY INTERIOR? Almost all the difference between Theirs and Ours isn't in the passenger compartment; it's in front of and beside the engine, in the doors, and in the trunk. (And by the way when did you last use your trunk to capacity? If it ever happened again you could mount the Baby V-8's spare on the trunk lid temporarily.)

CREATURE COMFORTS AND LABOR-SAVING DEVICES? The Baby V-8 has them all—automatic transmission, power steering, power disc brakes, electrically operated windows, flow-through fresh air heating and ventilating—short of esoteric ones like electric motors to move your seat. And they are all standard equipment. The optional extras don't start until one gets to radios and thermostatically controlled air conditioning.

POWER AND ACCELERATION? The Baby V-8 has enough for any real-life driving situation, but not so much that it uses up fuel and wears out its gold band radial ply tires quixotically. (Its 0-60 m.p.h. time, 10.8 seconds. Top speed, about 117 m.p.h. Yet cars on transcontinental test-runs during three years of development in this country averaged 17 m.p.g.)

FINALLY, AS FOR THE QUIETNESS, smoothness of ride, and effortlessness over long distances that very big cars with very big engines are noted for, *Car Life* magazine's engineering editor said the Rover Baby V-8 was *the best handling boulevard-ride car he's driven.* (Italics ours.) Still, it will probably take a test-drive in one to convince you that these qualities are not functions of sheer size and bulk. So see coupon.

Rover Division, Dept. C
British Leyland Motors Inc.
600 Willow Tree Road
Leonia, New Jersey 07605

☐ Send me the names of nearby dealers where I can go and convince myself.
☐ Also, the four color brochure on The Baby V-8.
☐ Also, details of the savings on your Overseas Delivery Plan.

Name_____
Address_____
City_____ State_____ Zip_____

**Suggested retail price at East and West Coast P.O.E., not including options, inland freight, dealer preparation, or state and local taxes.*

LICENSED TO GPA.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I regrettably failed to catch in both typescript and galley proof. As to other particulars, Mr. Feinberg is apparently quoting me in the first and second paragraphs of his letter when in actuality he is quoting Lewis Mumford and John McDermott. I quote them both with approval, of course, but it is important to make something clear about Mr. McDermott's words. The quotation from his well-known *New York Review* essay refers directly to a scientific and technological elite; I use it with that reference in a paragraph in which I am mainly concerned with elaborating on the modern confidence that, in Daniel Bell's words, "there are no inherent secrets in the universe, and that all is open." If this seems by implication to include Mr. Feinberg, he might recall that earlier in my essay I refer to his "commendable suspicion of goal-setting elites."

My explicit reference to Mr. Feinberg is in that part of the paragraph that follows the quotation from the McDermott essay. There I refer to Mr. Feinberg's conviction that the gap between the knowable and the known has been reduced to the point where long-range planning is possible for the first time in the history of man and to his confidence that "there will be no technical barriers to the accomplishment of our goals." Here we are at the heart of the difference between Mr. Feinberg and myself. To me such sentiments (and I conceive them to be central to his book) have a clear utopian ring, despite Mr. Feinberg's contention that his book is not "prediction or advocacy of a utopia."

It interests me to note that Mr. Joel A. Snow, a physicist with the National Science Foundation, expresses the same reservations that I do about the possibility of closing the gap between the knowable and the known and overcoming the technical barriers (see his review of *The Prometheus Project* in *Science*, April 18, 1969). He writes, for instance: "Most distressing is Feinberg's assurance that our advancing knowledge of natural science has or soon will have equipped us to carry out the kind of detailed analysis of causes and effects, costs and benefits, that our assessment of long-range goals would require. Our knowledge of human behavior is certainly much less complete, and is in many ways more important, for the setting of the limits of human aspiration." The fact that I too find such an assurance distressing has a good deal to do with my approving references to ancient Greeks and Christians, to say nothing of Shakespeare, McDermott, Mumford, and Bell.

As to Mr. Cornish: may I congratulate him in these parlous times on being part of a going enterprise.

On Gangsterism

To the Editor of Commentary:

The theory I have about Gore Vidal's article, "Literary Gangsters" [March], is that he started to write it as a paraphrase of the old joke whose last line is: "So it's not a fountain." He thereupon put together John W. Aldridge, Jr., John Simon, Robert Brustein, and Richard Gilman as his gangsters, whom he defines as "hit-and-run journalists, without conscience, forced to live precariously by their wits. . . ."

What was then supposed to happen in the joke is that a friend says to him:

"Come on now, Gore, those fellows haven't hit and run, here they are, right in America, they haven't run anywhere. As for their consciences, it isn't easy to judge consciences, you have to know people pretty well for that; that the four of them could be *without* conscience is a senseless thought, and their four consciences are probably above average. As for the way they live, it is by writing, teaching, lecturing, pretty much the way you live (your financial returns no doubt greater) . . . ."

At which point Gore Vidal exclaims:

"So they're *not* literary gangsters."

But Mr. Vidal couldn't write this joke because the punch line has the kind of intonation, inflection, which betrays what he calls in this article ". . . the incomplete assimilation of immigrant English into the old language (see Henry James's remarks on the subject at Bryn Mawr, 1904)."

So instead of telling the joke, he chose to comment on a book by Richard Gilman (the same Gilman, Mr. Vidal tells us at the beginning of his article, who dispraised plays of Mr. Vidal shown on television in the 1950's. It was the so-called Golden Age of television, and Mr. Gilman apparently thought that the playwrights of this age were not quite making Sophocles spin in his grave).

Among the criticisms Mr. Vidal makes of Richard Gilman's book are: He uses moral exhortations; he uses adjectives in threes; he qualifies his judgments; he uses the editorial "we"; he may believe in Progress; he denigrates the importance of narration in fiction; he does not properly understand Robbe-Grillet; he uses the word "increment" too much; he has a wrong stand on the question of illusion; ". . . he seems not to have read Barthes, nor grasped semiology. . . ."

The very stuff of literary gangsterism.

"Ya sure ya don't dig dis seemyology stuff? If ya lyin', it's coitans fer ya."

I don't have to see what Henry James said at Bryn Mawr in 1904. It was the year my father emigrated to America, and let me finish the joke for Mr. Vidal (". . . incomplete assimilation of immigrant English into the old language . . ." and all):

"So they're *not* literary gangsters."

Meyer Liben

New York City

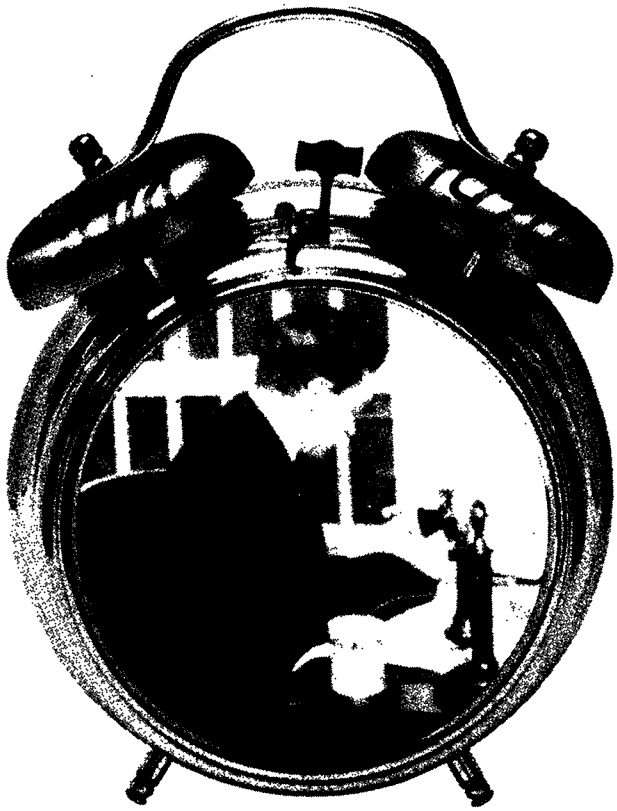
Yiddish Culture

To the Editor of Commentary:

I read Irving Howe's review of *The Education of Abraham Cahan* [Books in Review, March] with interest, and I agree with Mr. Howe that Cahan's five-volume opus is truly a classic. However, I disagree with Mr. Howe's gnawing doubt whether Cahan knew that he was working not only "toward" but "for" the disintegration of Yiddish culture in America. I am surprised in fact that such a close observer of this culture as Mr. Howe should be in any doubt on this matter. It is clear both from Cahan's memoirs and from his entire career that he was quite consciously working for the dissolution of the Yiddish subculture, despite the fact that, as the editor of the *Forward*, he was head of the world's largest Yiddish newspaper and a literary dictator in the community.

Cahan was not only not a Yiddishist, he wasn't even pro-Yiddish; he was one of the first to acknowledge that he was "clearing the way for the leap into America." Cahan opposed the *Arbeiter Ring*'s formation of Yiddish after-hours schools

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The sense of political coincidence is uncanny

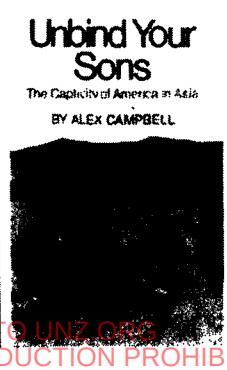
— like being caught up in a time machine that enables you to see the events of yesterday and the events of fifty years ago all in the same moment. These EARLY WRITINGS of Walter Lippmann are an antidote to the feeling of "discontinuity" Peter Drucker talks about. Suddenly you see where we've been, how far we've come, and how much our own struggles are a continuation of battles fought before. Great medicine for those liberals who lately seem to have lost their way. Great reading for anybody. Lippmann was in his twenties when he wrote these pieces for the *New Republic* — and how that young man could write! The Women's Lib? Senate confirmation of a Supreme Court appointee? Repression as a political tactic? The uses of scandal? The arrogance of military power? The problem of strikes in public service areas? The partisan uses of super-Americanism? The priorities of welfare vs. warfare? It's all here and lots more.

EARLY WRITINGS
by Walter Lippmann *Introduction by Arthur Schlesinger, jr.* $7.50.

THE NIXON WATCH
by John Osborne
Illustrations by Robert Osborn,
***Introduction by Tom Wicker.* $5.95.**

"The study of Richard Nixon, an exercise to which I have devoted most of my time since September of 1968, requires a steadfast clinging to the fact that he is human. That is not easy. Most of the people who work for him at the White House do their witless best to conceal the fact, making him out to be a President who never — but *never* — succumbs to the pressures of the office and who in all other conceivable ways is without fault or foible."

UNBIND YOUR SONS
The Captivity of America in Asia
by Alex Campbell. $6.50.



A primer on the politics of Asia and the Middle East by a much-respected journalist. Campbell weaves an astonishing amount of on-the-spot observation and background research into incisive profiles of each country. Compelling evidence that the U.S. presence is neither welcome nor worthy.

LIVERIGHT
386 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016

DIGITIZED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(not even . . . day schools), he had little sympathy for the cultural nationalism of the Bundists who arrived in America after 1905, and he disdained those who wanted to refine and regulate the language. He looked upon his own work as a preparation for the eventual submersion of the Jewish immigrant into the American environment—not only politically and socially but also linguistically and culturally. Cahan was under no illusions as to the fate of Yiddish in America. . . .

As it happened, what Cahan regarded as an instrument became, somewhat to his distress, an end in itself, and like his contemporary Leo Wiener (also born around 1860), he would have predicted the language's demise long before the allotted time. Not only would Cahan himself have found it "bearable to acknowledge" the death of Yiddish, he would have welcomed it.

B. G. KAYFETZ

Toronto, Canada

SST & GNP

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article, "The Poverty of Affluence" [March], Robert Lekachman does the cause of improving our environment a sad disservice. . . . As one example, let me cite his discussion of the supersonic transport plane. Mr. Lekachman suggests that its only advantage would be in reduced trans-Atlantic flying time, but he does not mention reduced cost per passenger, more trips per day, and the like. If Mr. Lekachman had mentioned these benefits and then raised some pertinent questions—whether, for example, reduced costs would in fact be passed on to the passenger—he might have proved his case. But he did no such thing; nor did he present any comparative data. . . . I'm afraid we are slowly being conditioned to substitute complaint for rational action in the environmental crisis.

ALLAN GRIFF

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is fitting that Mr. Lekachman has placed himself in the tradition of Hobson, Brailsford, and their step-children. . . . Hobson and Brailsford cogently argued that capitalism, viewed from a sociological perspective . . . would necessarily lead to imperialism. . . . Yet Hobson, Brailsford, Morel, and all their cronies refused to admit that war in Europe was a possibility. Being proper liberals they talked about "re-setting of the national direction," placing limits on the exportation of capital, etc. . . . It was clear that to admit the probability of a European war would be too great an assault on the integrity of their liberal principles. If capitalism could lead to a world war—the logical implications of their analysis—then Hobson and Brailsford would have been forced to retire from history, or to take to the barricades. . . .

I submit that Mr. Lekachman, in the "best" of the Hobsonian tradition, is guilty of the same waffling; his precriptions are cosmetic, and, at best, unlikely. After a reasoned, Marcusean exposition of the contradictions in North-American life—poverty and affluence; pollution and GNP; freedom bought at the price of privacy; security bought with terror; and so on—Mr. Lekachman proceeds with his verbal gymnastics. He speaks of "reordering national priorities," of curtailing the power of the military, of the equalization of wealth through slum projects. . . . Mr. Lekachman, like most American intellectuals, is obsessed with avoiding the word "socialism."

BERNIE SHAICOVITCH

Montreal, Canada

MR. LEKACHMAN writes:

I assure Mr. Shaicovitch that I have no objection to the word socialism. More than that, I am in general sympathy with that tradition of democratic socialism which has scored its successes in Scandinavia and, rather meagerly, England. However, since the political prospects for socialism in this country are approximately as substantial as Agnew's hopes of winning the Nobel Peace Prize, I saw no point in utopian speculation.

Mr. Griff saddens me. If we have really reached the point in our history where every patent technological idiocy must solemnly be evaluated, then we doubtless deserve the SST and shall probably get it.

"Fraternally Yours"—

FREE SONS OF ISRAEL · FRIENDSHIP · LOVE · TRUTH ·

- *for a more meaningful, Jewish life!*
- *for social progress, and understanding!*
- *to protect and preserve our heritage and freedom!*

THE FREE SONS OF ISRAEL
150 Fifth Avenue
N.Y., N.Y. 10011

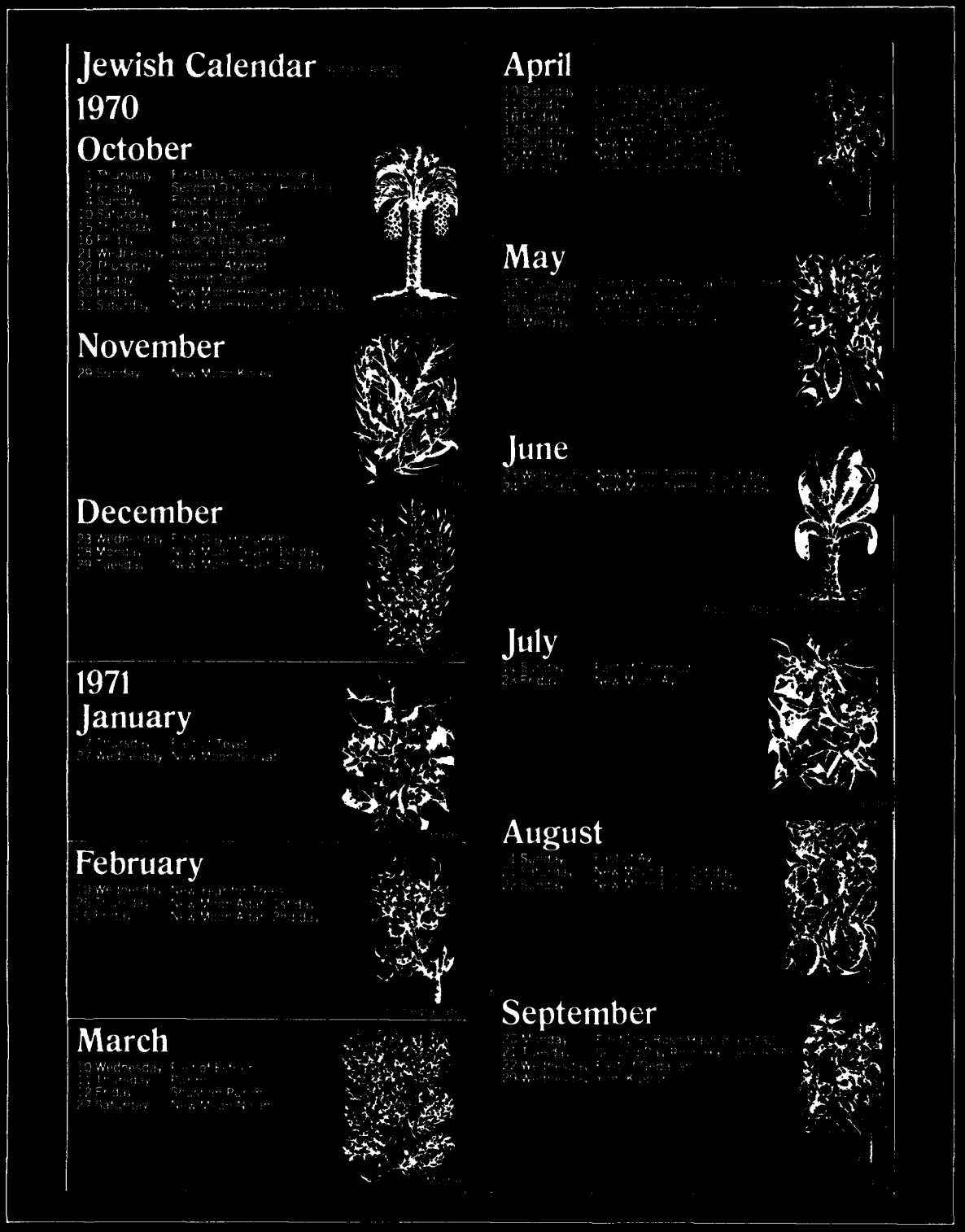
Gentlemen: Your fraternal program sounds interesting.
Please send me FREE descriptive brochure.

Name_____ Age_____

Address_____ City_____ State_____ (zip)

CM-1

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



NEW YEAR CARD TIME

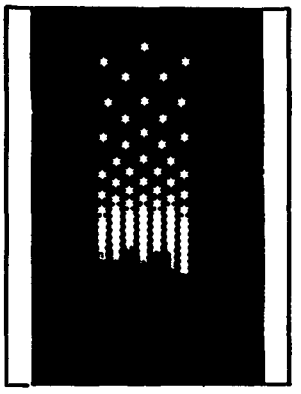
See the handsome collection of
Award-winning designs on the next two pages.

We hope that you will order early–
while the supply is complete.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

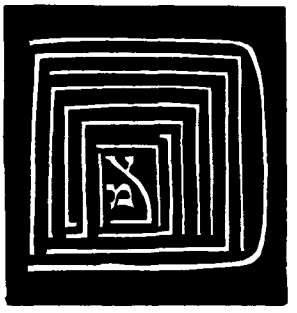
#77 ROSH HASHANAH: Engraving from Kirchner's famous collection, Jewish ceremonies.
dozen $3.00

#76 THE LOWER EAST SIDE: A Reminiscence.
dozen $4.00



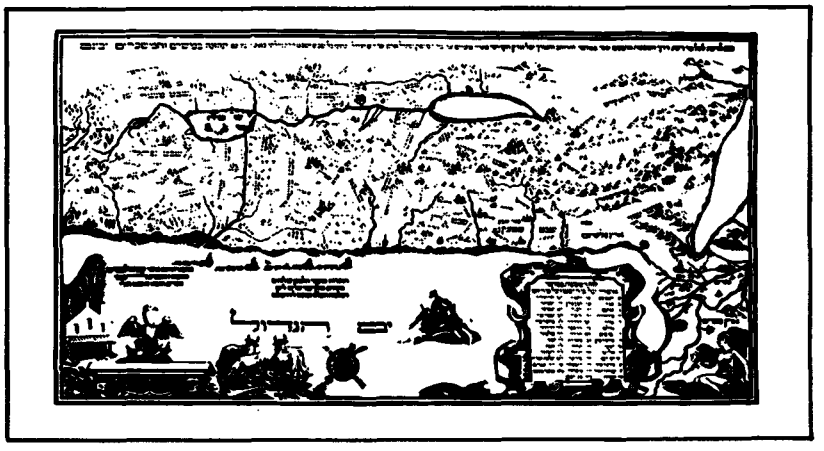
#72 CANDELABRA, contemporary interpretation by Ira Teichberg.
dozen $4.00

#68 L'SHANA TOVA TIKATEVU, the traditional wish for a good and sweet New Year, illuminated by Jules Maidoff.
dozen $3.00



#73 LABYRINTH, Kabbalistic abstraction by Moses Cordovero. Circa *1560*.
dozen $3.00

#75 REMBRANDT: Sensitive rendering by the great master of Abraham caressing Isaac.
dozen $4.00

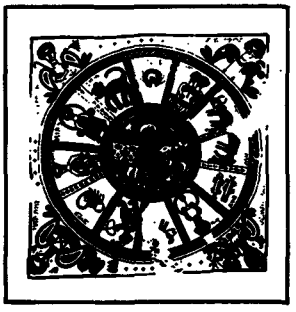


#82 THE HOLY LAND: The first map ever printed in Hebrew. Reproduced in sepia tones.
dozen $3.00

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW NEW YEAR CARDS

from Commentary Cards.... winner last year of the Graphic Arts Award for excellence in design and craftsmanship

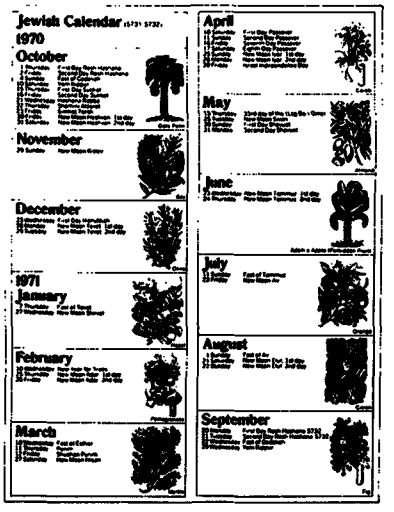


#79 ANCIENT MOSAIC: One of the most famous in the world from the Bet Alpha Synagogue in Israel — cira 500.

dozen $3.00

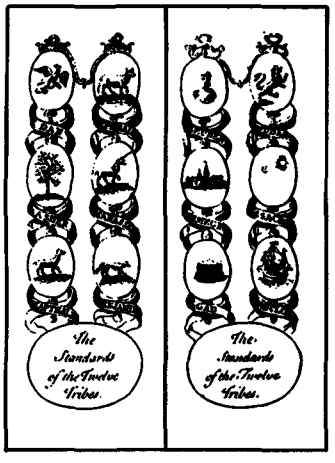
#83 CHASSIDIC DANCERS: By Felix Fabian.

dozen $4.00



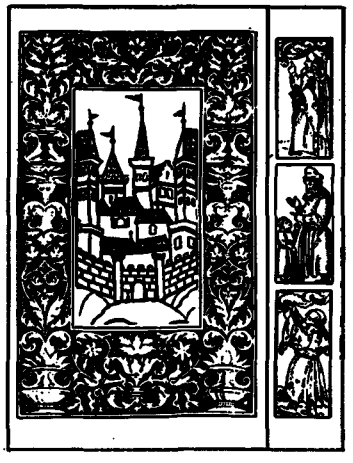
#64 HOLIDAY CALENDAR illustrated with the flora of Israel. Designed by Judith Ann Tirsch.

dozen $4.00



#66 THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL from a seventeenth century etching.

dozen $3.00



#69 JERUSALEM, from the Prague Haggadah, circa 1526. The illustrations are reproduced from the facsimile edition published by Shulsinger Brothers.

dozen $3.00

ORDER FORM

Commentary Cards
165 E. 56 Street, New York, N.Y. 10022

Please send the following packages of Commentary Cards for the New Year—

Card #	Quantity	Price for Package of 12s	Total

Special assortments (12 to a package) available:_____ $3 for 12 $_____

Total $_____

Shipping and handling .75

Total payment enclosed $_____

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Minimum order — 2 packages

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dutch Jewry

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Henriette Boas's review of Jacob Presser's scholarly book, *The Destruction of the Dutch Jews* [Books in Review, January], centers on her ardent defense of the Jewish Council (*Joodse Raad*) which in the Netherlands cooperated very effectively with the Nazi murder machine, and thereby facilitated the "smooth" deportation of more than 100,000 Dutch Jews to Auschwitz. The results of this cooperation became evident in the Munich murder trial of SS General Wilhelm Harster and his accomplices who were found guilty as co-organizers of the "Final Solution" in the Netherlands. I therefore feel it is very bad taste for Dr. Boas to call the worldwide moral condemnation of Jewish cooperators "fashionable." Her implication, of course, is that whoever condemns this cooperation—as Jacob Presser does—is questionable as far as his Jewishness is concerned. I worked on the indictment of the Nazi leader in Holland, Seiss-Inquart, and represented the families of Anne Frank and of the philosopher Edith Stein in the Munich trial. Based on my experience and my studies, I have come to the conclusion that Jacob Presser's book is both objective and scholarly. It is a standard work and merits high praise, not the completely negative evaluation given it by Dr. Boas.

ROBERT M. W. KEMPNER
Lansdowne, Pennsylvania

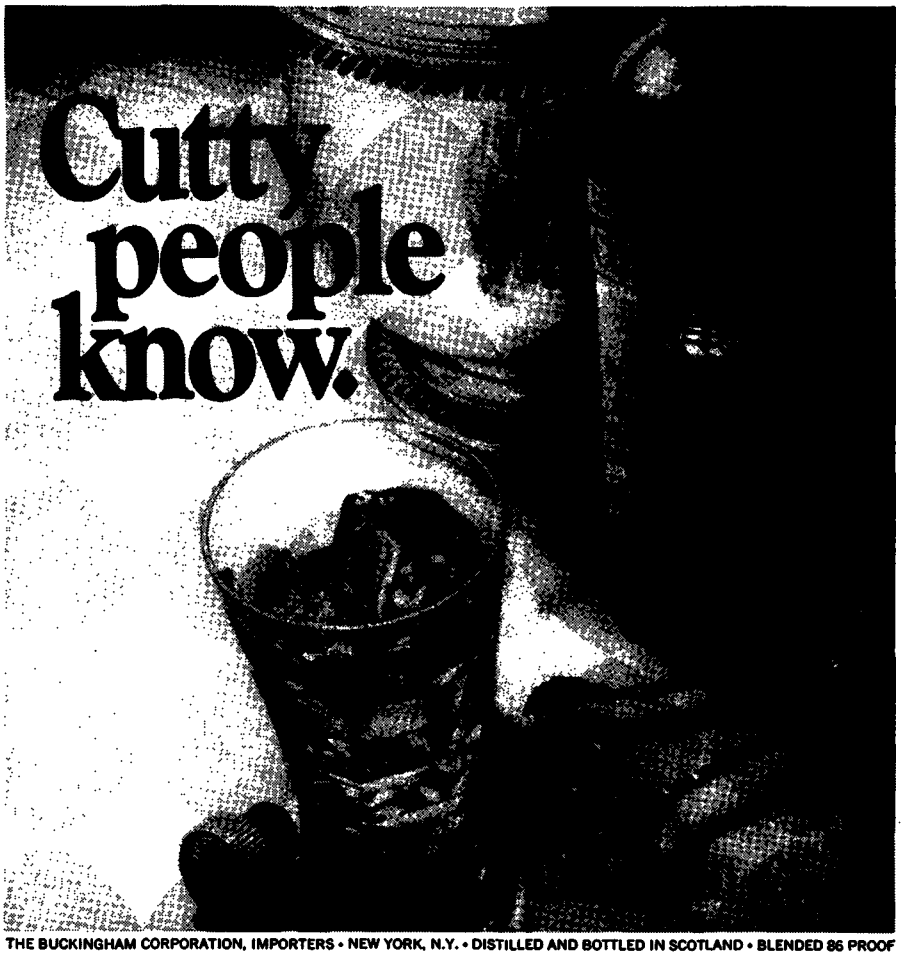
DR. BOAS writes:

Robert Kempner must have read my review of *The Destruction of the Dutch Jews* very superficially indeed if he can conclude that it centers on my "ardent defense of the Jewish Council." My criticism of the one-sided approach adopted by Jacob Presser—who, I regret to inform readers of COMMENTARY, died on April 30 of this year—with respect to the activities of the *Joodse Raad,* is but one of several objections I raised regarding the book. . . . As for my "ardent defense," I merely pointed out that matters having to do with the Jewish Council were far more complicated than Presser allowed, which apparently also applies to Mr. Kempner. . . .

As I write, Holland is preparing to commemorate the 25th anniversary of its liberation from Nazi occupation. It is characteristic of the present climate in the country that the observance is being approached in a spirit of questioning, even embarrassment, particularly on the part of the younger generation. As it happens, for several years now the annual commemorations have ceased to stress anti-German or anti-Nazi feeling, or for that matter Dutch gratitude to the Americans, Canadians, and British who liberated Holland; rather, they have come to give voice to the joy of the Liberation and the moral values of the Resistance. But today, even praising the Resistance seems to have gone out of fashion, and many have expressed the opinion that the best way of celebrating the 25th anniversary would be to let bygones be bygones, and to call attention only to present-day forms of fascism and oppression, such as Vietnam, Greece, South Africa, Angola, etc. Many young people have said, in effect, that they could not care less about what happened during the years 1940-45.

During the past two weeks, in connection with the 25th-anniversary observance, Dutch television has presented two documentaries . . . one on Anton Mussert, the Dutch Nazi leader, and the other on Kurt Student, the German general, now in his eighties, who was largely responsible for the bombardment of Rotterdam; both were represented as rather ordinary and even well-meaning men whom history has judged too harshly. If this is the present view of individuals like Mussert and Student, why then should the members of the Jewish Council—who had always been good Jews with a sense of public responsibility, but who were forced by circumstances beyond their control to shoulder a burden too heavy for them—why should they still be represented as abject scoundrels, which they most certainly were not? . . .

The Jews of Holland, alas, would have been—and were—deported, even without the Jewish Council. No one is in a better posi-



THE BUCKINGHAM CORPORATION, IMPORTERS • NEW YORK, N.Y. • DISTILLED AND BOTTLED IN SCOTLAND • BLENDED 86 PROOF

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion to confirm this than Mr. Kempner himself, who, at the Munich trial to which he refers, appeared as a joint prosecutor on behalf of the survivors, now living outside Holland, of three German Jewish families who before 1940 had found refuge in Holland, and most of whose members were deported as well, *viz.*, the father of Anne Frank, and the relatives, respectively, of the philosopher Edith Stein (who had converted to Catholicism) and the Loeb family (also Catholic converts, all of whose sons and daughters had joined religious orders). The Frank family, who had gone into hiding, were betrayed, discovered, and deported in August 1944, eleven months after the Jewish Council had been disbanded by the Germans and its members themselves deported. Edith Stein was discovered in a Catholic convent in the south of Holland, which she had joined as a nun some years earlier, and the members of the Loeb family were rounded up, on the same occasion as Edith Stein, in July 1942, when all Jewish converts to Catholicism in Holland who could be located were arrested and deported, in reprisal for the protest of the Roman Catholic bishops against the first mass deportations of Jews. With these arrests, as with many others, the Jewish Council had nothing whatsoever to do.

Mr. Kempner speaks about my bad taste. Let it therefore be noted that bad taste was precisely the charge leveled at Mr. Kempner when he appeared—without having been requested by anyone in Holland to do so—as a prosecutor in the Munich trial; by focusing attention on Anne Frank, Edith Stein, and the Loebs, he detracted attention from the fate of Dutch Jewry in general. . . .

In conclusion, Presser's *The Destruction of the Dutch Jews* certainly merits a measure of praise, as I indicated in my review, but not everything to be found therein should be considered as unassailable truth. . . .

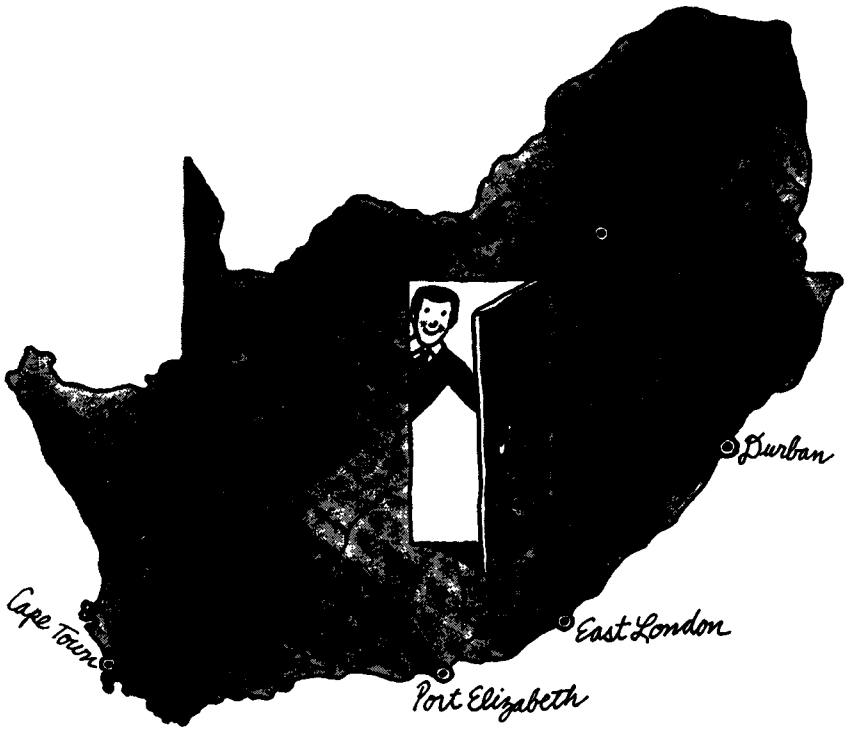
Middle East Policy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Anthony Hartley ["The U.S., the Arabs & Israel," March] has omitted the two political arguments which weigh most heavily in American considerations in the Middle East. First, everybody wants to be pro-Arab: Russia, France, Britain, Greece, and, more important, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Malaya, Indonesia. . . . Why should the United States antagonize all the pro-Arab "neutralists" by backing Israel? The U.S. is unpopular enough without maintaining another unpopular pose in the Middle East. Secondly, there is the argument that within the Middle East itself America can count on the permanent enmity of fourteen Arab states if she sides with Israel, but if Israel were to be destroyed, then she could probably have the backing of about half of these states. . . .

Mr. Hartley has also wrongly assessed the supposed pro-Israel

SEE SOUTH AFRICA INSIDE OUT.



Sit back and relax in the cosy comfort of a South African train. Drink in our wonder world of contrasts while you enjoy your tea. Mountains. Plains. Twisting rivers. Wild flowers. An infinite variety of birds. All sightseeable from the windows of our crack South African trains.

Catch the deluxe air-conditioned "Blue Train" with its fabulous cuisine, (shower baths too!), that winds its way through some of South Africa's most rugged country. Or the "Trans-Natal", a short overnight veld hop from Johannesburg to Durban.

And where our trains don't go, our tourist motor coaches do. Four days and $80 takes you from Johannesburg to the Kruger National Park. A wild life experience you'll never forget. For about $23 a day (accommodations included) you can go The Coastal Garden Route, or the Drakensberg, or see Bantu Villages, or travel in South-West Africa.

Whatever your South African mood, we'll get you there. For only $784 round trip from New York (economy excursion). Write SAR-TOURS, 655 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10021 (a Division of South African Railways). And make sure you see South Africa. The right way. Inside out.

SARTOURS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for people who persist in thinking:

COMMENTARY DISCUSSION GROUPS

Do you enjoy the company of others who refuse to let their intellects atrophy from disuse? Do you spark to conversation that is informed, concerned, even controversial?
If you do—then a Commentary Discussion Group should be an exhilarating experience.
Commentary Discussion Groups are small, private, independent gatherings of thoughtful people who come together once a month to engage in intellectual discussion.
Source material for these discussions comes from the pages of Commentary Magazine.
At first, the groups formed themselves, quite spontaneously. It was not until we began to receive letters requesting study materials that we were even aware of their existence. At that point we did what we could to encourage them.
We began to publish monthly Commentary Study Guides and even developed a Do-It-Yourself Kit for would-be founders of new discussion groups. There are now, so far as we know close to two hundred functioning Commentary Discussion Groups scattered about the country.
If you would like to form your own Commentary Discussion Group, fill out and mail the coupon below. We'll send you a Discussion Group Kit—including a Study Guide, a booklet on how to start things rolling, the necessary forms, and a packet of invitations you can send out announcing your first meeting. If you should change your mind about forming a Discussion Group, you may return the kit for a full refund.

Discussion Group Coordinator
COMMENTARY DISCUSSION GROUPS
165 East 56 Street
New York, New York 10022

I am a persistent thinker who is now giving serious thought to forming a Commentary Discussion Group.
Please send me the Do-It-Yourself Kit for which I enclose $2.00.
I understand that I can have my money back if I change my mind.

Name _____
Address _____
_____

stance of the Johnson government. The public utterances of Johnson and Rusk were far more hostile to Israel than those of Nixon and Rogers, while the warnings, threats, and censures of Israel by the State Department and in the Security Council were much more frequent during the Johnson administration

It is idle to imagine that the United States would have come to the assistance of Israel during the Six-Day War if conditions warranted it. The blocking of the Straits of Tiran warranted it, but all the Johnson government could do was suggest conferences. . . .

The fact is that ever since Truman, American administrations have been basically pro-Arab but have been prevented from expressing this policy by the prior and unprincipled presence of Russia, especially in Egypt. . . . A confused America doesn't know what to do. . . .

This American hesitancy (her so-called "balanced" policy) was the chief cause of the 1967 war and remains the chief cause of continuing Arab belligerence and intransigence and, in fact, of the continuing conflict in the area. A firm and determined diplomatic support for Israel would compel Russia and her Arab allies to make peace, but America cannot make such a determined stand; she declines to choose; she would prefer to have her decisions made for her after the event, after the next explosion. . . .

S. LEVIN
Johannesburg, South Africa.

Nixon & Civil Rights

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Nixon So Far" [March], Maurice J. Goldbloom compares the "distinctly poor" civil rights policy of the Nixon administration with its record on civil liberties, in which he finds evidence of a "split personality." But another way of describing the Nixon administration's defense of the Bill of Rights would be "half-hearted." For example, Mr. Goldbloom neglects to mention Attorney General Mitchell's ukase that the Justice Department can wiretap without the formality of judicial permission. While noting the administration's reluctance to utilize the concentration camps provided for in the McCarran Act, Mr. Goldbloom fails to compare the proposed preventive detention of criminals with such awkward notions as presumption of innocence and the right to liberty unless the deprivation accords with due process of law. For most of the history of Anglo-Saxon law, this latter phrase has meant trial by jury. . . .

But Mr. Goldbloom's most glaring oversight is his claim that only the Chicago conspiracy trial can be considered a political prosecution. He ignores the Black Panther party, but Vice President Agnew has not forgotten these "completely irresponsible, anarchistic . . . criminals"; nor has Assistant Attorney General Leonard who calls them "hoodlums" and then says "we've got to get them." Local police scarcely need such encouragement to harass this revolutionary political organization, but the Nixon administration must share the blame for the repression which has become obvious even to those who find the Black Panthers' ideas distasteful.

STEPHEN J. WHITFIELD
Newton Highlands, Mass.

Weimar Germany

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I do not wish to continue the debate with Martin Jay on Weimar Germany [Letters from Readers, January], but I must register my indignation at Mr. Jay's attempt to impute to me opinions I do not hold. He claims that in my letter I was advocating a coalition of socialists and the bourgeois center. To this I reply: I stated quite explicitly that "I still think it was a mistake to support . . . Bruening." Moreover, I could hardly have advocated something that was impossible, since no bourgeois center existed in Weimar Germany; Bruening was a reactionary, and I specifically called him that in my letter. What I did advocate was an opposition policy operating within the system—the very opposite of a coalition policy. But I also said it was a mistake to attack the system which, thirty-seven years later and speaking as a historian, I characterized as "the only barrier to a Nazi takeover." . . . I failed to understand the difference then because I was young and inexperienced in politics. But if Mr. Jay, with the benefit of hindsight, still does not understand the difference, he should not write about political affairs.

HENRY M. PACHTER
The City College
New York City

LICENSED TO MZ ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMENTARY IS NOT A MASS MAGAZINE

In ten years our circulation has quadrupled. Yet today, we could still squeeze all our subscribers into Yankee Stadium. But what an extraordinary gathering it would be, including the most informed, articulate, influential and accomplished people in the English-speaking world.

They would be a varied group, ranging politically from Dwight Macdonald (who says that *"Commentary* is, for 'keeping up,' much the best of the monthlies and quarterlies, in fact the best for any purposes"), to Clare Booth Luce (who calls *Commentary* the only literate magazine published in America).

An impressive delegation from Washington would be there too – ranging from occupants of the White House to some of their most severe critics on Capitol Hill.

Commentary, as the name implies, is a magazine of opinion concerned with everything of interest to people of intelligence, taste, and curiosity. Its aim is to clarify issues, analyze problems, encourage original thinking, and spark honest debate.

Obviously, to earn the high regard of so many highly regarded people it must also aim for excellence. It had better be challenging, literate, and unafraid of controversy. *Commentary* is. It must avoid platitudes, pat answers, and easy solutions. *Commentary* does. Its contributors must be among the most lucid and pertinent experts anywhere. They are.

In any issue you might find Michael Harrington, Daniel P. Moynihan, or Bayard Rustin exploring serious problems of the moment.

Or contemporary historians like Theodore Draper and George Lichtheim, going below the surface of urgent questions and setting them in an illuminating long-range perspective.

Or such penetrating literary critics as Edmund Wilson, Lionel Trilling, and Leslie A. Fiedler. Jack Richardson, one of America's foremost younger playwrights, reviews the theater for us. America's most important fiction writers appear in our pages: Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, and James Baldwin among them.

Commentary is probably the only magazine in the world that has sparked the formation of discussion groups. Over one hundred of them meet each month to discuss and argue the contents of our magazine.

Commentary was initiated two decades ago by the American Jewish Committee to make a significant contribution to serious publishing in America. It is still published by the Committee. But, now as then, it does not serve any parochial interest. *Commentary* was ecumenical long before Vatican II, and remains, as *The New York Times* describes it, "an exciting and important forum for coherent ideas about the whole American culture. . . ."

It should be apparent to you that *Commentary* is not a magazine for everyone. It requires intelligence, and the willingness to use all you have. But because *Commentary* is unique, we are making an unusual introductory offer.

A year's subscription, 12 monthly issues, costs $10 ($12 at the newsstands). A 6-month subscription costs $5.50. However, if you think you would like to join the select circle of *Commentary* readers, we'll send you your first copy free.

If the first issue is everything we say it is and you want to continue getting it, do nothing. We'll start your subscription with the second issue you receive. If you decide *Commentary* is too much for you after reading the first issue, tell us. We'll refund your money in full.

You have nothing to lose and a great magazine to gain.

SEE FOR YOURSELF...
SIGN UP HERE (FOR YOU OR A FRIEND)

Commentary Magazine 165 East 56th Street New York, N.Y. 10022

Gentlemen:

I accept your challenge and your offer. Send me the current issue of *Commentary* free, and enter my subscription. If at any time I decide that *Commentary* is not for me, I'll let you know. You'll refund the balance plus a quarter to reimburse me for my postage, time, and trouble.

☐ 6 months $5.50 ☐ 3 years $27.00 ☐ Check attached
☐ 12 months $10.00 ☐ 5 years $39.95 ☐ Please bill me
(Outside U.S.A. add $1.50 per year)

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Agit-Prop & the Rosenbergs

Allen Weinstein

THE DOMINANT "theater of propaganda" in the United States today is not an "official," government-sponsored one, as in Communist countries, but a semi-official "revisionist" school of drama, which exploits and distorts historical facts for its own predetermined ends. A case in point is *Inquest,* subtitled "A Tale of Political Terror," Donald Freed's play about the Rosenbergs which might just as appropriately have been called *Invitation to a Whitewash.*

Though the author claims that *Inquest* is in the tradition of the Weiss-Hochhuth "theater of fact," it becomes clear as the evening progresses that the audience has been summoned not merely to witness a courtroom drama and to observe a particular set of "facts," but to participate in commemorating a ritual murder. To legitimize his position Freed first primes the audience to recognize itself as being in the presence of History, Fact, and Truth, by spreading against the background of the stage, in giant-size lettering, on huge glass panels: "Every word you will see or hear on this stage is a documented quotation or reconstruction from events." These "reconstructions," the program further informs us, "draw on letters and verbal reports but they are inventions in the service of truth rather than facts."* With the audience thus prepared, Freed's "tale of political terror" unfolds in a series of vignettes taking place in "The [FBI's Perjured] Courtroom; The [Fascist American] World; The [Rosenbergs' Innocent] Past."

The drama itself is a crude morality tale, in which Julius and Ethel Rosenberg are portrayed as helpless victims of a purported FBI frameup, convicted through the perjured testimony of Ethel's brother and sister-in-law, David and Ruth Greenglass. The Rosenbergs emerge as confused, naive, fearful, "progressive," "human," and, above all else, innocent. David and Ruth Greenglass, on the other hand, are shown as lazy and malicious schemers, weak money-grubbers, compassionless and easily intimidated—in a word, moral monsters—and Harry Gold, the government's third major witness against the Rosenbergs, is portrayed as an incomparably vain schizoid liar, weak and susceptible, like the Greenglasses, to FBI scheming.

The play's other characters receive equally subtle handling—in fact, in *Inquest* you *can* tell the players without a scorecard. Emanuel Bloch, the Rosenbergs' lawyer, one of several at the actual trial, is honest, humane, skillful, beleaguered, and hard-working—the model of a first-rate defense attorney.† Prosecutor Irving H. Saypol, on the other hand, strides forth as a sinister and witting accomplice to the FBI frameup along with Judge Irving R. Kaufman and Saypol's young assistant, Roy Cohn (who is played as Roy Cohn). Needless to say, the FBI agents responsible for the perjured testimony are type-cast as "fascists." Finally, Freed renders Tessie Greenglass, David and Ethel's mother, as a singularly boorish Jewish mama, contemptuous of her talented daughter and overly protective of her son, the spy.

Since Freed has attempted not merely to recreate the events of the Rosenberg case itself but also to evoke the social atmosphere within which it transpired, "the world" of cold-war America frequently intrudes on the play's courtroom scenes through pictures projected on the glass panels or in quotations spoken by off-stage mimics. These range from anti-Communist harangues by J. Edgar Hoover and Joe McCarthy to clemency pleas by the Pope; from photos of the principals at the Rosenberg trial to shots of mass rallies held on behalf of the defendants. Through this gimmickry Freed obviously hopes to conjure forth the atmosphere of "political terror" which he holds responsible for the Rosenbergs' conviction and execution, but the actual effect often reminds the spectator of those exuberantly inept attempts at "realism" in grade-school Christmas pageants ("I am Joe McCarthy. Kill the Commies"; "I am the Pope. Don't kill the Commies!").

In a further effort to validate the courtroom identities which he has assigned them, the author portrays his major characters in a series of incidents from their pre-trial and post-trial lives: Ethel and Julius at home—singing folk songs, loving one another, worrying about their children; David Greenglass and Harry Gold, scheming with the FBI. Also featured is Ethel and Julius's death-house dialogue in the form of the letters they exchanged during their years of imprisonment prior to execution. But the worst is saved for last: the re-enactment of the "ritual murders." An "electric chair" is placed on stage and the Rosenbergs, first Julius and then Ethel, go to their deaths in a dignified and unre-

ALLEN WEINSTEIN *reviewed* Odyssey of a Friend: Whittaker Chambers' Letters to William F. Buckley, Jr. *in last month's issue.*

* One spectator was reminded of the popular law-enforcement television program that opened with an equally intimidating assertion of authority: "The program which you are about to see was taken from the actual files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation."

† Even most "revisionist" writers on the case concede that Bloch and his fellow defense attorneys, despite their hard work and good intentions, proved singularly inept lawyers, both during the trial and in subsequent appeals.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

See the art that turned on Picasso.

You can see the influence of frican art in the portraits of Picasso's ıbist phase.

You can see its colors and broad rokes in the work of Ferdinand Leger.

You can even see the impact of in those strange, marvelous long faces Modigliani.

To understand why this art had ıch a tremendous effect on many of ıe great artists of the twentieth century, ke a look around South Africa.

Not far from Pretoria, for in- ance, you can stop at the N'debele village, here masterly women artists create ıstract, geometric murals on the walls their houses. As well as weaving exotic adwork and dyeing their blankets ith breathtaking color combinations.

Or while you're in Kimberley, sit the Bantu Museum. It's different ɔm American museums. Here you can tually pick up fantastic masks, sculpture, pottery, and examine them at close range, feel their shape and weight. Which gives you intimate, exciting insight into these works.

Of course, you'll want to bring home examples of African art and artifacts. And you can. In the shops and the Indian Market you'll find masks. Pottery. Weaving. Stone sculpture. Wood sculpture (artists work in woods of different colors and hardness, producing a wide variety of interesting subjects). You can even take home a warrior's shield as tall as a man.

Prices are incredibly low. Walk off with a Zulu axe for $2. Or an African mask for 1/10th of what it would cost in the U.S.

Interestingly enough, these low prices apply not just to art, but to everything.

A tourist can live quite comfortably here for $10 a day.

This means that vintage wines, for instance, cost you a mere 75c-85c per bottle.

And along with the vintage wines, you'll find all the other comforts of contemporary life.

In fact, South Africa is almost unique in its striking contrasts. With its modern cities -- like Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town – you'll discover *both* primitive life *and* present-day luxury.

Fastest, easiest way to get there is with South African Airways. A Boeing 707 Stratojet will wing you down from New York via the most direct route.

Your travel agent will help you get the most out of your stay. See him. And let him paint you a picture of what you can see and do there.

SAA
SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS

Come with us.
A little off the beaten track.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pentant manner. The audience, having witnessed the tragedy, depart as full communicants in the ghastly rites at hand. What emerges from all this is an evening of oversimplified history and oversentimentalized drama, an exploitation of the Rosenbergs' tragic encounter with history for the purposes of illustrating an official moral, namely, that "the state—when it is frightened enough—has been, is now, and will be in the future capable of ritual murder, suppression, death camps, and genocide. That's the lesson of the 20th century." Far from paying any respect to the complex and partly-disguised personalities of his two protagonists, Freed has reduced them to the single aspect of innocent victims: "decent, simple, and lovable people"—and nothing else.

EVEN MORE remarkable than the play itself, however, was its enthusiastic reception by most leading critics. How did such an obviously stilted, agit-prop melodrama manage to persuade a critic like Clive Barnes of the Rosenbergs' innocence? To take an even more improbable case, why should John Simon, known ordinarily for his unsparingly abrasive dismissals of theatrical sham, have succumbed to the drama's fraudulent piety? The deference shown *Inquest* by writers like Barnes and Simon apparently reflects their willingness, along with that of an increasing number of troubled "progressives," to subscribe to a devil theory of recent American life. The couple's actual guilt or innocence is clearly as irrelevant to these critics as it is to the author himself. "Even if they were [guilty]," Simon acknowledges in an argument similar to that which Barnes employed in his review, "their trial [i.e., *Freed's* trial] was a monstrous farce," for *"this* is what it is like to live in a frenzied country under a hysterical government and an intellectually and morally inadequate President; *this* is how faulty trial by jury really is." That jury trials are meant to be decided on points of evidence and not on moral testaments, remains unimportant to these critics, as one can see from Julius Novick's review of the play in the *Village Voice*:

> I conceded at the beginning of this review that for all I knew, even after seeing the play (I have done no reading on the subject), the Rosenbergs might just conceivably be guilty, but I have been writing ever since of my love for them, or at least for their stage-images, or for myself-in-them. I have called the Rosenbergs (I was referring specifically to the stage-Rosenbergs, but I meant the real ones too) [*sic*]—I have called the Rosenbergs "decent, simple, and lovable people"; would I still say this even if they turned out to be guilty? Yes, I think so, although in that case, inside their simplicity would be suspended a deep and sad and dishonorable complexity.

Perhaps the best way to appreciate the extraordinary meaning of Mr. Novick's moral argument would be to substitute the word "Eichmann" for "the Rosenbergs," change the tenses, and read the quotation back for sound. Of course the Rosenbergs were in many ways "decent, simple, and lovable people," concerned for their children and intensely in love. But do these fairly common personality traits acquit them of the charge of espionage? Freed seems to think so—and he has evidently convinced the drama critics—but his "reconstructions," presumably drawn from personal interviews as well as from the couple's voluminous death-house correspondence, offer no help in answering the question of guilt or innocence. In fact, the author conveniently overlooks those very aspects of Ethel's and Julius's personalities which might have some bearing both on the government's interest in the Rosenbergs and on the possibility of their innocence.

To cite but one glaring example: in a play devoted supposedly to the "facts" of the case, why is no mention made of the fact that the Rosenbergs were dedicated Communists? Not ony does this go unmentioned, but the suggestion is made that the pair had been casually "progressive" people, perhaps a bit to the Left of FDR. In 1970, some twenty years after the trial, and at a time when no possible reason could exist for hiding such a piece of information, one can only assume that the deceit here is intentional, and it suggests that Freed's drama is either too naive to warrant credibility or too cynical to compel trust. Either way, the author does the Rosenbergs—and their possible "innocence"—a vast disservice.

AT THIS point a rather brief summary of the Rosenberg case itself might be in order. In February 1950 Klaus Fuchs, a leading, German-born British physicist, was arrested in England. Fuchs had confessed to having been a Soviet espionage agent during the Second World War while he was working at Los Alamos on the atomic bomb project. Several months later, the FBI took into custody a Philadelphia chemist named Harry Gold, who promptly admitted to having served as Fuchs's courier in a Russian-organized spy ring which stole secret information on American atomic research. A series of arrests by the FBI followed Gold's confession and, in the fall of 1950, a quartet of New York Jewish radicals—the Rosenbergs, Morton Sobell, and David Greenglass—stood trial, charged with having conspired to commit espionage. This "crime of the century," as FBI Director Hoover termed it, aroused enormous public indignation in the United States, since the exposure of the spy ring practically coincided with the American government's announcement that the Soviet Union had exploded its own atomic bomb, thereby ending America's nuclear monopoly.

At the trial, Greenglass, a machinist by trade, testified for the government that the Rosenbergs, his sister and brother-in-law, had recruited him into the spy ring. Greenglass had been an Army machinist at Los Alamos in 1944 and 1945, and, according to his own testimony, had given Harry Gold (once) and the Rosenbergs (several times) diagrams and other material which could convey to Soviet scientists the firing mechanism and internal structure of the atomic bomb. Harry Gold and Ruth Greenglass corroborated David's testimony concerning the Rosenbergs' involvement in the plot, but the government's case

LICENSED TO GALE/GVRL
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trans action Magazine of Social Science and Modern Society

The New Kid on the Block Comes on Strong with Questions and Answers

And we don't pretend to tell you how to act. And we certainly don't even waste your time with articles about yesterday's events and pseudo personalities. What we do, month after month, is present the most exciting social problems of this country. . .exploding tired myths and deflating well-worn polemics you read, again and again, in mass circulation magazines.

You'll see some of our authors in *Harper's, Atlantic, Psychology Today* and *Saturday Review.* But when they write for *TRANS*-action, you get the hard facts and the plain truth about their work, the latest scientific research in the tension points of our society. . .campus revolution, black militancy, crime and criminals, U.S. militarism at home and abroad, the sexual revolution. And they don't just examine these problems. You'll learn why they persist. . .and some ways they might be resolved. What's more, *TRANS*-action features lively and up-and-coming social scientists, with imagination and information no one else has.

Please start my subscription to TRANS-action with the next issue.

- ☐ 3 years at $21.00 ($7.00 per year)
- ☐ 2 years at $15.00 ($7.50 per year)
- ☐ 1 year at $8.50

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____ 701 COM

- ☐ Payment enclosed - send me 2 extra FREE issues.
- ☐ Please bill me.

TRANS-action, Box A, Rutgers—The State University, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

against Morton Sobell rested largely upon testimony by a former friend and fellow-Communist that Sobell had attempted to recruit him into the espionage ring.

During the trial, defense lawyers objected repeatedly to the government's insinuations that the Rosenbergs' background in the Communist movement constituted presumptive proof of their complicity as spies. In the end, the jury accepted the credibility of the government's witnesses and found all four defendants guilty. Judge Kaufman awarded Greenglass, despite his cooperation, a stiff fifteen-year sentence; Sobell received the maximum thirty years in jail allowed by law; and the Rosenbergs, who had allegedly run the spy network, were sentenced to death. Ruth Greenglass, although a confessed accomplice to the espionage, was never brought to trial.

For two years after their sentencing, until their execution in June 1953, public support for the Rosenbergs mounted steadily both in this country and abroad. Although Communists and ultra-radicals dominated the formal nationwide "committee" organized on their behalf, thousands of non-Communists signed the comittee's petitions, some of which called merely for commutation of the death sentences. Attorneys for the couple challenged the fairness of the trial and at numerous hearings, both before Judge Kaufman and in the appellate courts, introduced "new evidence" to support legal appeals for a new trial. But all of these legal efforts failed, and the couple went to their deaths in 1953. Even many leading anti-Communist Americans protested their execution as an act of cruel and unusual punishment, either on moral grounds or because of questions concerning the credibility of prosecution witnesses.

"Revisionist" accounts of the case began appearing soon after the execution, although as early as 1951 William Reuben, a journalist for the fellow-traveling *National Guardian*, had written a series of articles charging an FBI frameup. Reuben published an extended version of his argument in *The Atom Spy Hoax* (1954), and most of his conclusions were echoed in John Wexley's *The Judgment of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg* (1955). The revisionist analysis of the case received its most thorough and influential statement in Walter and Miriam Schneir's *Invitation to an Inquest* (1965), which summarized every conceivable bit of evidence and speculation that suggested the Rosenbergs' innocence.

DURING THE trial itself, defense attorneys generally accepted the government's claim that a spy conspiracy had existed which connected the Greenglasses and Harry Gold. Counsel for the Rosenbergs insisted only that their clients had neither initiated nor joined this conspiracy. Rather, they argued that the Greenglasses had implicated them in a desperate move to curry government favor and save their own skins. Only after Reuben's articles appeared in the *National Guardian* did partisans of the Rosenbergs begin arguing a more sinister view of the case. Reuben, Wexley, and the Schneirs based their belief in the Rosenbergs' innocence squarely upon the notion of a skillfully-laid FBI frameup, which trapped *all* the defendants, including the Greenglasses and Harry Gold, in an "atom spy conspiracy" that never existed. They find "evidence" for such a monstrous government counter-conspiracy in a number of places, although only some of their major contentions can be described here.

Even while the case was being appealed in the courts, the Rosenbergs' attorneys gained access to some memoranda stolen from the office of O. John Rogge, lawyer for David and Ruth Greenglass. In these notes, David and Ruth discussed their involvement in the alleged spy plot in terms which differed significantly from their later testimony at the trial. For one thing, they never mentioned Ethel's complicity and, although they referred to Julius's involvement, he does not emerge in the notes as a "master spy." The memos likewise revealed that the FBI had apparently coached the Greenglasses extensively on their testimony. For their study the Schneirs also gained access to recordings of pre-trial conversations between Harry Gold and his attorney, which showed that the Bureau had tutored Gold even more relentlessly before his appearance at the Rosenberg trial. In these conversations, Gold offered a far more innocuous account of his one meeting with the Greenglasses in Albuquerque, New Mexico, than the version he later volunteered at the trial. For one thing, Gold never mentioned having known anything about the Rosenbergs' involvement in the conspiracy, although in trial testimony he professed a much greater awareness of their role.

By comparing these pre-trial statements with the trial testimony of the three government witnesses —two already under indictment for capital crimes and the third (Ruth Greenglass) threatened with indictment—even those persuaded of the Rosenbergs' guilt might question the complete credibility of the witnesses through whose evidence the government secured a conviction that led to the death penalty. Almost no documentary material substantiated the confession made by Gold and the Greenglasses at the time of the Rosenberg trial; the prosecution submitted not a single purloined document or other actual proof that espionage had been committed, apart from the sworn statements of its three confessed conspirators. The Schneirs assert, in fact, that FBI agents not only planted the appropriate testimony in the minds of these witnesses but that they manufactured the single piece of "hard" evidence that linked Gold tenuously to the Greenglasses (and thereby to the other alleged conspirators): a photostat of a 1945 Albuquerque Hilton check-in card which Gold supposedly signed after visiting the Greenglasses. The Schneirs subject this document to elaborate analysis and persuade themselves that it was faked. Furthermore, they offer the Atomic Energy Commission's word, along with that of numerous key scientists at Los Alamos, that the sketches made by Greenglass for the FBI in 1950 to substantiate his claim to have stolen meaningful data on the atomic bomb, were practically worthless to Russian scientists, whether or not the machinist had passed the originals along

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lead-Free AMOCO.

The only one that's right right now.

The only one that's ready right now.

You are right to fight pollution now. And there is only one lead-free premium gasoline ready to help you. It's Lead-Free AMOCO. It's right for your country. It's right for your car. It's even right for your pocketbook. Time is running out. There are 84 million cars in our country. If we all help...

somethin' else from the people who are AMERICAN

© 1970, The American Oil Company, Chicago, Ill.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

six years earlier. Basically, however, the revisionist argument stands or falls on the question of whether Gold and the Greenglasses were truthful witnesses or capricious perjurers.

DONALD FREED stuffs many of the "facts" exposed by the Schneirs into the body of his play, although he generally distorts or exaggerates their actual meaning, thereby turning the Schneirs' elaborate revisionist tapestry into little more than a crude wall poster. Still, Walter and Miriam Schneir themselves, like other revisionist writers on the case, often seem more ingenious than candid in their own selection of "facts." Throughout their book, for example, they either overlook or explain away rather unconvincingly the Rosenbergs' lifelong commitment to the Communist movement, a commitment which (according to the testimony of their own friends) had made them passionate union organizers and party recruiters. ("Julie and Ethel could save their own skins by talking," Mrs. Morton Sobell exclaimed at a 1952 pro-Rosenberg rally, "but Julie and Ethel will never betray their friends.") The revisionists also neglect to provide a reasonable explanation for the precise manner in which Greenglass acquired the $3,900 he possessed at the time of his arrest—if it had not been received, as David claimed, from Julius as money to finance his escape. Similary, who if not Harry Gold actually gave the Greenglasses the $400 which Ruth deposited in an Albuquerque bank in June 1945 one day after Gold allegedly gave them the money in exchange for atomic information? Why also, were the Schneirs, although unsparingly detailed on even the most minor points, so reticent when alluding to Ethel Rosenberg's history of psychiatric treatment, both prior to her arrest and in prison?

In a review of the Schneirs' book in these pages,* Alexander Bickel pointed out the essential flaw in the revisionist argument:

> The remarkable feature of this early record [Bickel observed] is that the rudiments of Gold's story were there. . . . If, then, the FBI prodded Gold into elaborating these rudiments into a full story by putting to him material from the Greenglass confession [which, even in its earliest version, insisted on Julius's involvement in the conspiracy—A. W.], and prodded Greenglass to confess by asking him to affirm or deny as much as was known of Gold's story—if this was the method of interrogation, as no doubt it was, it was normal and proper, and does not in itself destroy or even substantially weaken the credibility of *either Gold or Greenglass.*

Finally, the revisionists must contend with the fact that the memoirs of another major Soviet agent, Kim Philby, twice mention the Rosenbergs as Russian agents, a curious admission under the circumstances.

"The Rosenberg Case is nevertheless a ghastly and shameful episode," Bickel wrote. "There is first of all the death sentence, and secondly the death sentence, and thirdly the death sentence, and then again the death sentence." That the Rosenbergs were executed remains an awful and unwarranted act, and were this the sole concern of Freed's play, one might question less vehemently its other inadequacies. Unfortunately, no dramatist can *acquit* the Rosenbergs of espionage on the basis of *who* (he thinks) they were any more than he could *convict* them on such specious grounds.

WHAT IF someone were to write a play, the author was asked recently, "taking the position that the Rosenbergs were guilty?"

> "But that play has already been written," said Freed. "It was written by Irving Saypol and Roy Cohn at the behest of J. Edgar Hoover. It was a laugh riot."

Such a glib retort exposes one essential weakness of dramas like *Inquest.* In the hands of enthusiastic partisans, the "theater of fact" can easily become fraudulent history. Freed's eye is obviously less on the "facts" of the Rosenberg case than on its apparent "lessons"; nor do the Rosenbergs themselves attract him as *subjects* of dramatic concern in their own right. Rather, they interest the author primarily as convenient symbols of those "lessons" which he finds that the 20th century teaches all right-thinking men. The doomed couple are somewhat impersonal objects, and piteous anguish for their fate must persuade a gullible audience that a "murderous pattern" of such ritual slaughters exists in American life stretching in an unbroken line from Sing Sing to Vietnam.

Consider, finally, Freed's political message, that "lesson" of radical innocence which the critics found so persuasive. Once more the author has provided what he considers an appropriate comparison between past and present. "Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, and Eldridge Cleaver," Freed has observed, "are the Julius and Ethel Rosenbergs of today":

> Now we can read letters of the Rosenbergs, hear their words and see them as sympathetic people but in the 50's they were considered slimy Jewish Communists like the bad niggers of today. What we have to prevent is a play being written 20 years from now that will cause audiences to say, "Do you mean they really fed breakfasts to poor children and that they were sensitive, extraordinary human beings? We thought they were something out of the American nightmare, coming to the suburbs to rape our daughters."
>
> Bobby Seale must not go to the electric chair in Connecticut. This country cannot take again what we went through in the 50's.

One might surmise from Freed's analysis that Bobby Seale is on trial not for murder but for dispensing high-quality porridge to grateful infants. This view of the situation accords with the logic of many who sympathize either with the Panthers or with white radicals like the Chicago Seven, all of whom are seen as merely the latest in an endless string of modern victims of "Amerikan" fascism. Of course, despite the occasional throwback to the past, like Communist historian Herbert Aptheker who addressed the last Black Panther national convention, most of the current crop of parlor revisionists were too young to join earlier cold-war crusades for America's

* January 1966.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"moral redemption." The students who now demand that Bobby Seale be freed, with or without a trial, have no personal recollection of that period after the Rosenberg trial when American Communists organized "spontaneous" local committees to save the pair, working with their usual Progressive party allies to turn the trial into a "cause." It might even come as a surprise to many of these same young people (surely, though, not to their older supporters?) to learn that the Black Panthers' "breakfast program" bears as much relation to the specific act for which Bobby Seale is on trial as Julius Rosenberg's folk-singing did to the charge of espionage against him. But, then, "tales of political terror" generally supply their own logic, and should John Mitchell's avid prosecutors continue their pursuit of "conspirators," the New Left's aging mandarins will possess a more than adequate number of overnight martyrs for public consumption.

Alas, there may be such "lessons" galore in years to come, thereby blurring still further the line between those who practice the "theater of fact" and those who practice "revolution as theater." One such merging of the two came in a recently-announced forthcoming drama of the Chicago conspiracy trial, starring, naturally, the Chicago Seven. How Messrs. Barnes, Simon, and Novick should sink their gums into that one! For their tolerant critical reception of *Inquest*, indeed the very appearance of such a play, is symptomatic of a growing crisis in confidence among many leading cultural spokesmen in the United States, a crisis that becomes daily more evident.* The willingness to accept radical myths as unvarnished fact, as in Freed's equation of the Rosenbergs and the Black Panthers, reflects a deep and often irrational hostility among an increasing number of intellectuals to the entire fabric of American life. Those who can make no substantive distinctions between the Rosenberg trial and the Slansky trial, for example, or between the aims of Bobby Seale and those of Martin Luther King, or even between the dilemmas of Richard Nixon's "Amerika" and those of Adolf Hitler's Germany, will not trouble themselves over petty details of historical accuracy or dramatic honesty. They require instead the consoling simplicities of a purely political theater, one in which "facts" are merely "lessons" to be taught and "truth" a code word for correct doctrine. In this connection, Richard Hofstadter's classic description of the "paranoid style" merits consideration:

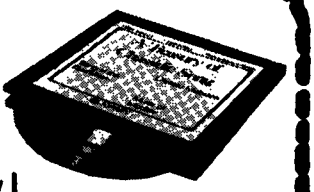
> The central image [of the paranoid style] is that of a vast and sinister conspiracy, a gigantic yet subtle machinery of influence set in motion to undermine and destroy a way of life. . . . The paranoid spokesman sees the fate of this conspiracy in apocalyptic terms. . . . He constantly lives at a turning point: it is now or never in organizing resistance to conspiracy. Time is forever just running out. . . . The typical procedure of the higher paranoid scholarship is to start with . . . defensible assumptions and with a careful accumulation of facts, or what appear to be facts, and to marshal these facts toward an overwhelming "proof" of the particular conspiracy that is to be established. It is nothing if not coherent—in fact, the paranoid mentality is far more coherent than the real world, since it leaves no room for mistakes, failures, or ambiguities. . . .

The tensions and unrest of recent American life, for reasons that would require another essay to elaborate, have made fashionable the simple coherence of revisionist history and theater, both of which appeal to the overheated imaginations that Hofstadter described. It still remains to be seen whether serious historians, dramatists, and critics will fall into line, or whether they will have the stamina to resist the coercions of the current radical moralism.

* The roots of this crisis among a certain segment of literary men are explored in Irving Howe's "The New York Intellectuals: A Chronicle & A Critique," COMMENTARY, October 1968.

A TREASURY OF CHASSIDIC SONG

LIMITED EDITION — 3 RECORD SET



Here, for the first time in one collection, is the extraordinary range of authentic Chassidic music — 32 superb performances by a group of specially-assembled instrumentalists, solo performers and choristers . . . recorded on three unbreakable 12-inch long-playing records (33⅓ RPM playable on either mono or stereo sets), in a handsome boxed edition.

RECORD NO. 1 offers twelve songs and nigunim dating from the first generation of Chassidim and their immediate descendants, handed down intact from father to son for nearly 250 years. Included are three compositions by the Baal Shem — the charismatic 18th century mystic who founded Chassidism.

RECORD NO. 2 presents eight songs and nigunim composed by the great dynasty of rebbes of Modzitz, including the present Rabbi Samuel (who leads his worldwide flock from his court in Tel Aviv).

RECORD NO. 3 presents twelve songs and nigunim of the populous Lubavitcher Chassidim, whose rebbe and court are today located in Brooklyn.

A Few of the Many Well-Known Selections

A Din Toyre Mit Got • Shir Hashirim • A Dudele • Korev Yom • Nigun Besht • Ovinu Malkenu • Uforatzto • Tzomoh L'cho Nafshi • Nigun Simchoh • Vald Nigun • Chassidic March

A Treasury of Chassidic Songs

Three 12" long-playing records (33⅓ RPM; playable on mono or stereo) with complete bi-lingual texts and explanatory notes

Price for the limited edition of A Treasury of Chassidic Song (complete with bi-lingual texts and notes) is $13.25.

Commentary Records, 165 East 56th Street, New York, New York 10022

Please send____sets of Chassidic Records at $13.25 each. My check for _____ is attached. Commentary Records pays shipping costs. (Refund Guaranteed)

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Environment

dirty is a ~~popular~~ word

Environment (envəi·rənmĕnt). [f. E
v. + -MENT. Cf. OF. *environnement.*]
1. The action of environing; the state o
environed. (With quot. cf. ENVIRON *v.* 4.)
1603 HOLLAND *Plutarch's Mor.* 1009, I wot not
cumplexions and environments [*orig.* περιελεύσεις].
2. *concr.* That which environs; the ob
the region surrounding anything.
...E in *For. P.*

1897 Oxford English Dictionary

en·vi·ron·ment (en vī′rən mənt, -vī′ərn-)
aggregate of surrounding things, condition
ences, esp. as affecting the existence or dev
someone or something. **2.** the act of environ
state of being environed. **4.** that which
[ENVIRON + -MENT] —**en·vi′ron·men′tal,**
vi′ron·men′tal·ly, *adv.*
environmen′tal resist′ance, the l
fect of environmental conditions on th
growth of a population.

1969 Random House Dictionary

The dictionary definition of *environment* has changed little over the years. However, the conditions of our environment have changed radically.

Today, there is a generation of Americans asking important questions about environment. They deserve answers.

Arno Press and The New York Times will soon publish two reprint collections. The wealth of information provided in these books constitutes a basis for our efforts to build a healthy environment.

AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Books by scientists, naturalists, philosophers, historians, artists—a roster of conservation saints and devils from the eighteenth- to the twentieth-centuries. Some celebrate the environmental riches of their times; others foresee imminent deterioration. None of these books are out of date, for the basic laws of survival are the same. The collection provides an historical view of today's ecological problems, adding to the urgency for their resolution.

42 books, $606. Prepublication price until October 1, 1970, $550 CHARLES GREGG, *Editor*

Published in cooperation with The Gregg Press.

THE RISE OF URBAN AMERICA

Housing, welfare, slums, crime, health, education, religion, and the social and physical effects of technology are presented historically and specifically in this decisive collection. Here are books from colonial times treating the origin of urban problems, nineteenth-century works discussing the first urban explosion, and twentieth-century writings analyzing the consequences of urbanization. A comprehensive and in-depth collection; today's urban problems can't be solved without these books. PROF. RICHARD C. WADE, *Editor*

57 books, $906. Prepublication price until November 1, 1970, $750

Available now

THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY 1934-1967

In the face of political furor and public reluctance, the TVA went ahead with its program of conservation, area development of natural resources, agricultural growth, and the advancement of the social well-being of millions of people. The growth of this extraordinarily successful effort of man to control his environment is a fascinating story and nowhere more thoroughly told than in the Annual Reports of the TVA itself.

Annual Reports (1934-1967) 33 volumes—$415.00.

For complete information on these three collections, please write to:

ARNO PRESS, Box 111, 330 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017

A Publishing and Library Service of The New York Times

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This is the second in a new series of monthly comments by the editor of COMMENTARY *on a wide range of topical matters. The opinions Mr. Podhoretz expresses here are his own, and are not to be taken as statements of editorial policy.*

First Things, and Last

Norman Podhoretz

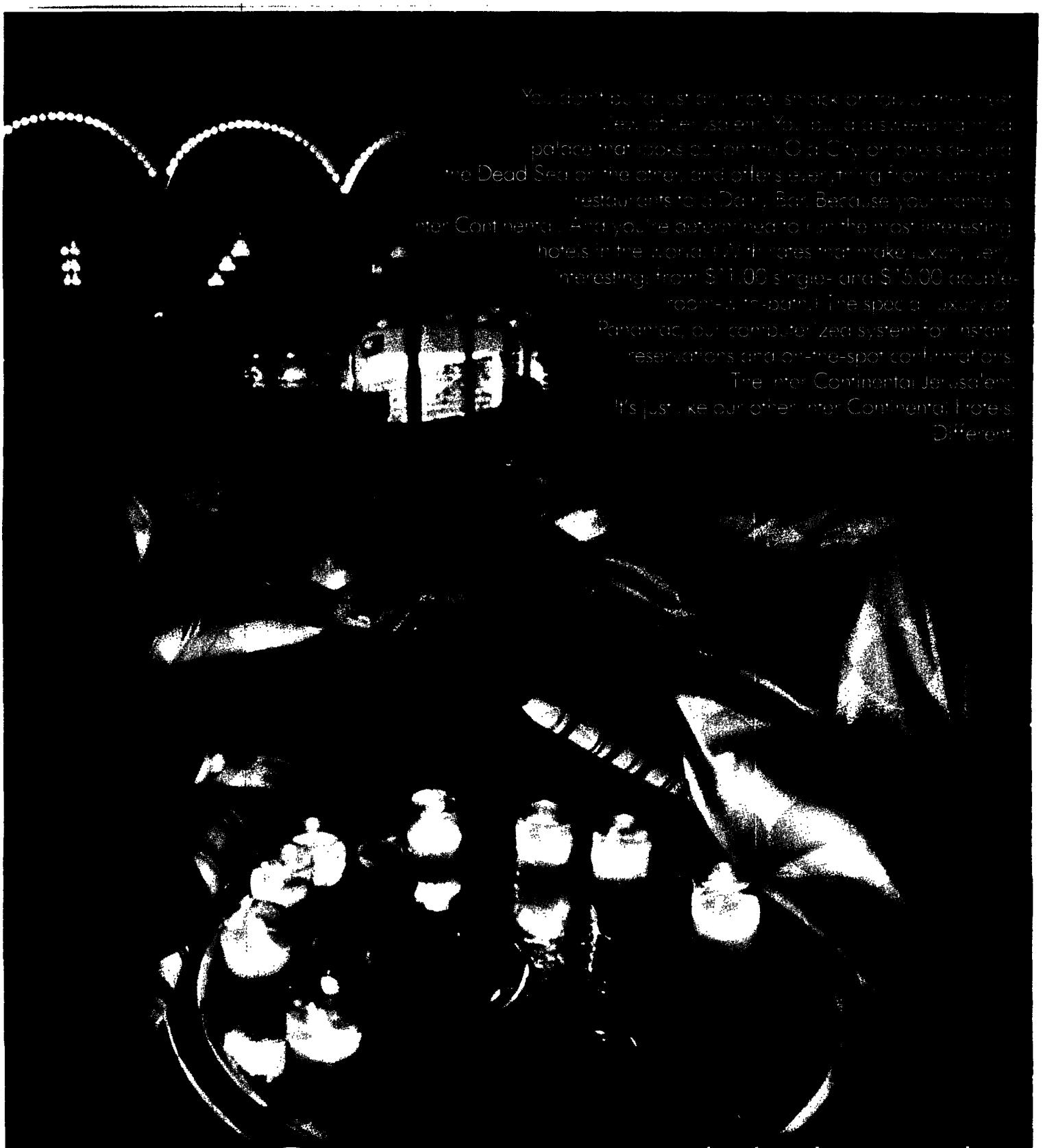
DESPITE THE invasion of Cambodia, the end of the Vietnam war is clearly in sight, for us at least if not for the Vietnamese themselves. By the time we leave, more than forty thousand Americans will have been killed in a war for which even the President of their country now refuses to make any noble or transcendent claim. Does this mean that they will have died in vain? It is a hideous question to which no adequate answer can be given in terms ordinarily considered political. In thinking about such a question, if one is thinking seriously, one's mind inevitably turns to first things and to last things, precisely those things that politics no longer even pretends to care about in the slightest. My own mind, on this Memorial Day of 1970, has been much taken up with first things and last things, but about these I will not here presume to write. Let me instead tell a story.

A few years ago I accompanied my friend Willie Morris, the editor of *Harper's,* on a trip to Mississippi which, as all the world must surely know by now, is his native state. Like every Southerner I have ever met, Willie Morris is mildly obsessed with the Civil War, and it was therefore unthinkable that a trip to Mississippi should pass without a visit to Vicksburg, the scene of one of the bloodiest battles of that bloodiest of American wars. Some 22,000 men, Yankees and Confederates both, were killed at Vicksburg; their average age was about nineteen. As Willie and I wandered together up and down the interminable rows of gravestones reading the names and the regiments of all those fallen children of a hundred years ago, I was suddenly invaded by a phrase from the Gettysburg Address which, at Willie's insistence, I had only minutes earlier read aloud from a plaque posted at the entrance to the cemetery: *that these dead shall not have died in vain.* "What do you really think, Willie," I said, "did they die in vain or not?" For a long moment he stared down at a gravestone, but instead of answering he led me over to where his grandmother, who had come along with us on the drive from Yazoo City, was sitting. She was a very old lady, born just a few years after the Civil War and still possessed of a living sense of connection with it. "Mamie," he said, "tell us. Did all those dead boys buried here die in vain or not? What do you think, Mamie?" The old woman, nearly blind but otherwise entirely alert, shook her head slowly, squinting sightlessly in the direction of his voice. "I don't know, son," she said, "I don't know." And then, pausing to consider, she added in a tone that simultaneously chilled the blood and warmed the heart, "I reckon they all would have been dead and buried by now anyway."

That astonishing remark—which says, among all the other things it says, that to die young in a war is one of the possible ways for mortal beings to die, and not necessarily the worst—has been much on my mind today, Memorial Day of 1970, as the wanton American involvement in Vietnam comes closer and closer to an end.

France's most delightful after dinner coffee . . a GRAND Marnier COFFEE
1 oz. Grand Marnier...
1 glass of hot black coffee...
topped with whipped cream.
The Spirit of
Grand Marnier
For delightful cocktail and gourmet recipes, write for our free recipe booklet.
PRODUCT OF FRANCE / MADE WITH FINE COGNAC BRANDY / 80 PROOF / CARILLON IMPORTERS, LTD. DEPT. C 730 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



You don't just stay at a Inter-Continental. You live it. You're a sultan in a palace that looks out on the Old City of Jerusalem and the Dead Sea or the desert, and offers everything from gourmet restaurants to a Disco Bar. Because your name is Inter-Continental. And you're determined to run the most interesting hotels in the world. It's the latest night make luxury very interesting. From $11.00 a night and $15.00 a double room, in any of the spectacular luxury of Penta-Net, our computerized system for instant reservations and on-the-spot confirmations. The new Inter-Continental Jerusalem. It's just like our other Inter-Continental Hotels. Different.

Inter·Continental Hotels.

When you've seen one, you haven't seen them all.

Abidjan. Amman. Auckland. Bali. Bangkok. Barranquilla. Beirut. Berlin. Bogotá. Budapest. Caracas. Cork. Curaçao. Dacca. Djakarta. Dublin. Düsseldorf. Frankfurt. Geneva. Hanover. Hong Kong. Jerusalem. Kabul. Kansas City. Larnaca. Limerick. Livingstone. Lusaka. Managua. Manila. Maracaibo. Medellín. Melbourne. Montego Bay. New Delhi. Pago Pago. Paris. Ponce. Quito. Rawalpindi. San Salvador. Santo Domingo. Singapore. Tehran. Tokyo. Vienna. Zagreb.

LICENSED TO UBS ONE
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Urban Civilization & Its Discontents

Irving Kristol

It is in the nature of democratic countries that, sooner or later, all serious controversy—whether it be political, social, or economic—will involve an appeal to the democratic principle as the supreme arbiter of the rights and the wrongs of the affair. One might begin by invoking the idea of justice, or liberty, or equity, or natural rights; but in the end what is unjust or illiberal or unnatural—or even what is simply "un-American"—will be defined in terms of what is most properly democratic. It follows, therefore, that to the extent to which our idea of democracy is vague or unrealistic or self-contradictory, we shall be less able to resolve the issues that divide us.

I do not mean, of course, that a neat and precise and generally accepted definition of democracy will in and of itself automatically pacify the body politic and avoid bitter conflicts of interests and values. There is no magic in ideas, even when we superstitiously attribute a quasi-divine authority to them. But ideas do give shape to our sentiments, our consciences, and our moral energies. And a muddled idea can, in time, give birth to some fairly grotesque political realities. One has only to recall that, for nearly a century after the formation of the American republic, it was widely accepted that our idea of democracy for all was compatible with a condition of slavery for some, to realize that this is no mere abstract possibility. And the fact that it required a bloody civil war to establish what the authentic intentions of our democracy were would indicate that—as in certain older theological controversies that disrupted the real world of Christendom—the precise meaning of the democratic dogma can have the most material bearing upon the kind of society we live in and the ways in which we live in it.

At the moment, for example, we are all of us much exercised about the quality of life in our American urban civilization. I have no intention, at this time, of analyzing the numerous problems which make up what we familiarly call the "crisis of our cities." Instead, I should like to focus on the apparent incapacity of our democratic and urban civilization to come to grips with these problems. In other words, if it is proper to say that we experience the crisis of our cities, it is equally proper to say that we *are* the urban crisis. And what I want to suggest further is that one of the main reasons we are so problematic to ourselves is the fact that we are creating a democratic, urban civilization while stubbornly refusing to think clearly about the relation of urbanity to democracy.

In this respect, we are far removed indeed from the founding fathers of this republic, who thought deeply about this relationship—but in a way so uncongenial to us that we find it most difficult to take their thinking seriously. We even find it difficult to study their thinking fairly. Thus, in the many books that have appeared in recent years surveying the history of the American city and of American attitudes toward the city, we usually find a discussion of the "agrarian bias" of the founding fathers. More often than not, this is taken quite simply to mean that their opinions were an unreflective expression of their rural condition: a provincial prejudice, familiar enough—the antagonism of country to town is no new thing—and understandable enough in human terms, but now to be regarded as rather quaint and entirely unilluminating. I think that this approach is not only an obstacle to our understanding the American past; it also represents a lost opportunity for us to take our bearings in the present.

To take such a bearing, we ought to begin with an appreciation of the fact that the ideas of the founding fathers did not, in their sum, amount to an agrarian *bias* so much as an anti-urban *philosophy;* which is to say, the founding fathers had reasons for thinking as they did and until we consider these reasons, and come to terms with them, we are more likely to be living testimony to the validity of their apprehensions than to the presumed anachronistic character of these apprehensions.

The founding fathers saw democracy in America as resting upon two major pillars. The first, whose principles and rationale are so superbly set forth in the *Federalist Papers,* was the "new science of government" which made popular government possible in a large and heterogeneous republic. This "new science" designed a machinery of self-government that has to be considered as one of the most remarkable political inventions of Western man. The machinery is by now familiar to us; representative and limited government, separation

Irving Kristol is Henry Luce Professor of Urban Values at New York University. The present essay is adapted from Mr. Kristol's inaugural lecture at the University.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of powers; majority rule but refined so that it had to express the will of various majorities elected in various ways, a diffusion of political and economic power which would thwart the intentions of any singleminded faction no matter how large and influential, and so on and so forth. The basic idea behind all these arrangements was that the pursuit of self-interest was the most reliable of human motivations on which to build a political system—but this pursuit had to be, to use one of their favorite phrases, the pursuit of self-interest "rightly understood," and such "right understanding" needed the benevolent, corrective checks and balances of the new political machinery to achieve decent self-definition, i.e., to converge at a point of common weal.

The second pillar envisaged by the founding fathers was of a spiritual order—and the fact that most of us today prefer to call it "psychological" rather than spiritual would have been taken by them as itself a clear sign of urban decadence. To designate this pillar they used such phrases as "republican morality" or "civic virtue," but what they had constantly in mind was the willingness of the good democratic citizen, on critical occasions, to transcend the habitual pursuit of self-interest and devote himself directly and disinterestedly to the common good. In times of war, of course, "republican morality" took the form of patriotism—no one, after all, has ever been able to demonstrate that it is to a man's self-interest to die for his country. In times of peace, "republican morality" might take the form of agreeing to hold public office; since the founding fathers assumed that the holders of such office would be men of property, to whom the pleasures of private life were readily available, and since they further thought of political ambition as a form of human distemper, they could candidly look upon public service as a burden as well as an honor. But whatever the occasion, such a capacity for disinterested action seemed to them—as even today, it still seems to some—a necessary complement to the pursuit of self-interest rightly understood.

Now, given these ideas on how popular government in America could survive and prosper, it is only natural that the founding fathers should have taken a suspicious view of big cities, and should have wondered whether, in the end, they could be compatible with a free and popular government. In this suspicion and wonder they were anything but original. The entire literature of classical political philosophy—from Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero on to Montesquieu—exhibits a similar skepticism, to put it mildly, concerning the quality of life that people led in big cities, and expresses doubt whether the habits of mind generated there—what we might call the urban mentality: irreverent, speculative, pleasure-loving, self-serving, belligerent toward all conventional pieties —were compatible with republican survival. Nor, it should be observed, did the real, historical world present much reassurance, by way of contrary evidence. The big cities that the founding fathers knew or read about all displayed in luxuriant abundance the very vices they wished above all to avoid in the new nation they were constructing. From imperial Rome to imperial London and Paris, the big city was the locus of powerful, illiberal, and undemocratic government, inhabited by people who were either too wretched and depraved to be free, democratic citizens, or by ambitious, self-seeking men to whom the ideals of popular government were utterly alien and even repugnant.

That *small* cities could be soberly and democratically governed, the founding fathers understood well enough—Geneva and republican Rome and the towns of New England testified to that. That medium-sized cities could sustain a modified and partial form of popular government, based on a deferential citizenry and a patrician elite, they also knew—the histories of Athens and Venice were very familiar to them, and their own Boston or Philadelphia offered them living instances of this general truth. But the wisdom of the ages had reached an unequivocal conclusion, in which they concurred, about large, populous, cosmopolitan cities: the anonymous creatures massed in such a place, clawing one another in a sordid scramble for survival, advantage, or specious distinction, their frantic lives reflecting no piety toward nature, God, or the political order—such people were not of the stuff of which a free-standing, self-governing republic could be created. Or, to put this point in a more philosophical way, which would have been immediately comprehensible to our ancestors even if it sounds a little strange to us: if self-government, as an ideal to be respected, means the willingness of people to permit their baser selves to be directed by their better selves, then this precondition of self-government is least likely to be discovered among the turbulent and impassioned masses of big cities.

TODAY, in the second half of the 20th century, this theory of the founding fathers is being put to the test, and I do not see how anyone can be blithely sanguine about the ultimate conclusions that will be drawn. Our most obvious difficulty is that we have so many big cities and seem so persistently inept in devising a satisfactory machinery of self-government in them—swinging wildly from the corrupt rule of political machines to abortive experiments in decentralized, direct democracy, with a slovenly bureaucracy providing the barest minimum of stability in between. This is indeed a sore perplexity to us; and no clear solution seems visible even to the most thoughtful among us—witness the uncertainty among our political scientists whether our major cities should evolve into super-cities, almost little states, or whether they would be better off

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dissolving into mini-cities, almost small towns. Twenty years ago the first prospect seemed the more enchanting; today it is the second; tomorrow the winds of doctrine might once again suddenly reverse themselves. Our ideas about our cities are as unsettled and as uneasy as the cities themselves.

But this obvious difficulty is only the smaller part of the challenge posed us. Though we are indeed becoming ever more "a nation of cities," we are *not*—despite a contrary impression created by the news media—on our way to becoming a nation of very big cities. The proportion of our population in cities of over one million has been drifting downward for several decades now, and this proportion is, in the decades ahead, more likely to decline further than it is to increase. Many of the traditional functions of the great metropolis are being radically decentralized, both by technological and by sociological innovation. Air travel has already robbed the metropolis of its role as a transportation hub for people; air freight is gradually doing the same thing for goods. And just think of the extraordinary way in which our cultural community—our writers and artists and sculptors and musicians and dramatists—has, with recent years, been dispersed among the university campuses of the nation. A city like New York is more and more becoming a showplace for the work of creative artists, rather than a milieu in which they live. Even bohemia, that most urban of cultural phenomena, has been transplanted to and around the university campus, and if, for example, Greenwich Village is to survive as a bohemian community, it will very likely do so as a parasite upon the body of New York University.

It is conceivable, therefore, that, though our major cities keep floundering in a sea of troubles, the nation as a whole will not be profoundly affected. And what so many people now proclaim to be an imminent apocalypse may yet turn out to be not much more than—though it is also not much less than—a change of life for our older cities. Even the most critical problem which today confronts these cities—the problem of black Americans living in the squalid isolation of their ghettos—may yet reveal to posterity a very different meaning from the despairing significance we ascribe to it today. For these are the citizens who, if we are lucky, might infuse these cities with a new vigor and a new purpose. It is hard to see who else can accomplish this—it is hard even to see who else would care enough to try. As a white New Yorker, born and bred, I am bound to have confused feelings about such a course of events. But I should like to think I am a sufficiently objective student of the city not to see as a crisis what may merely be a personal problem of adaptation to historical change.

But I digress: because I am a man who has lived all his life in big, old cities, I am inevitably more keenly interested in them than, as a student of the contemporary city, I perhaps ought to be. The overwhelming majority of my fellow Americans clearly prefers to live elsewhere and this preference is by now an established feature of American life, for better or worse. If we are "a nation of cities," we are also becoming to an ever greater degree a nation of relatively small and middle-sized cities. These are the growing centers of American life—especially if we count as "small cities," as we should, those scattered university campuses which support populations of 30,000 or more. It is quite true that these new cities are not spread uniformly over the land but tend to cluster in what we call "metropolitan areas." This fact has led some observers to conclude hastily that such settlements have only a transient, juridical existence—that they ought properly to be regarded as part of an incipient "megalopolis," in the process of coalescing. This is almost surely an illusion—or, if one prefers, a nightmare. Though a great many urban sociologists and urban journalists seem to be convinced that Americans in large numbers would really prefer to live in the central city, and are being forced out of their cities by one external cause or another, the evidence is quite plainly to the contrary. People leave the big cities, or refuse to come to them, because they positively prefer the kinds of lives they can lead in smaller suburban townships or cities of modest size; and these people are not going to become citizens of any kind of "megalopolis." Indeed, though most central cities are now aware of their ghetto populations only as a source of trouble and calamity, one can predict with considerable confidence that ten years from now these same central cities will be fighting tooth-and-nail to hold on to these populations, as they too begin to experience the attractions of urban life outside our major urban centers.

And here, I think, we have at last come to what I would consider the heart of the matter. For the overwhelming fact of American life today, whether this life be lived in a central city or a suburb or a small city—or even in those rural areas where something like a third of our population still resides—is that it is *life in an urban civilization*. In terms of the *quality* of American life, the United States is now one vast metropolis. Cities are nothing new; the problems of cities are nothing new; but an urban civilization is very new indeed, and the problems of an urban civilization are without precedent in human history.

When I say that our urban civilization is something radically new, I am obviously not unmindful of the historical fact that, in a profound sense, just about every civilization we have known has been urban in origin and character. Civilization, both the high and the low of it, is something that has always been bred in cities—which is why all romantic rebels against civilization, in the past as in our own time, so

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vehemently repudiate the "artificiality" and "superficiality" and "inhumanity" of city life. But the city and its civilization has always been one thing, while the rest of the nation and its way of life has been another. Between these two things there has always existed a high degree of tension—on the whole a creative tension, though it has sometimes found release in exceedingly ugly moments. Between urban life in the city and provincial life outside the city there has always been a gulf of mistrust, suspicion, and contempt. Yet it is not too far-fetched to say that each was an indispensable antibody for the other's healthy existence. Life in the city could, for example, be careless of conventional morality, and even have an experimental attitude toward all moral rules, precisely because of the reassuring certainty that, throughout the rest of the nation, there prevailed a heavy dullness and conformity. This dullness and conformity reassured the city man, even as he mocked it, that his moral experiments were in the nature of singular explorations with no necessary collective consequences. Similarly, the sovereignty of conventional morality outside the city was sustained by reason of the fact that those who would rebel against it simply emigrated to the urban center. In addition, the rigid character of this traditional morality was made more tolerable to the provincial citizenry because of the known and inevitable fact that, in most cases, urban experiments in freedom were not equally or altogether successful for the individual who was presumptuous enough to engage in them. And when they did succeed—when they resulted in artistic creativity or political distinction—the provincial nation participated, at no cost to itself, in the glory.

Now, this provincial nation has been liquidated. To anyone like myself who watches old movies on television—and by old movies I mean no more than fifteen or twenty years old—the most striking impression is of a world that belongs to another era. These movies have farmers' daughters—honest-to-goodness farmers' daughters, with all that this implies for the sophisticated urban imagination; they have happy, neighborly suburban families who smugly and snugly pass the evening watching themselves on television; they have prim schoolmarms and prissy schoolmistresses; they have absent-minded professors who don't know the difference between a foundation garment and a foundation grant; they have hicks who run gas stations and cops who drop in for apple pie; they have children who address their fathers as "sir"; they have virginal college maidens and hardly any graduate students at all; they have wildly efficient and fanatically loyal secretaries—in short, they have a race of people who only yesterday were the average and the typical, and who have so suddenly become, in their laughable unreality, a species of "camp."

What has happened, clearly, is that provincial America—that America which at least paid lip service to, if it did not live by, the traditional republican morality—that America which, whether on the farm or in suburb or small town, thought it important to preserve the appearance of a life lived according to the prescriptions of an older agrarian virtue and piety—that America which was calmly philistine and so very, very solid in its certainties—that America is now part and parcel of urban civilization. The causes of this transformation are so obvious as to need no elaboration; one can simply refer in passing to the advent of the mass media and of mass higher education, and there isn't much more that needs to be said. The ultimate consequences of this transformation, however, are anything but obvious. We know what happens—both for good and bad; and it is ineluctably for both good and bad—when an urban center liberates the energies—both for creation and destruction; and it is ineluctably for both—of provincial emigrés; what happens constitutes the history of urban civilization. But we do not know what happens, for the sufficient reason that it has never happened before, when an urban civilization becomes a mass phenomenon, when the culture of the city becomes everyman's culture, and when urban habits of mind and modes of living become the common mentality and way of life for everyone.

If the founding fathers were worried about the effects of a few large cities upon the American capacity for self-government, what—one wonders—would they make of our new condition? One is reasonably certain they would regard it as an utterly impossible state of affairs. And whether they would be correct in this regard is something that it will be up to us to determine. Certainly the history of American cities, during this past century and a half, does not permit us to dismiss their fears as either irrational or anachronistic. Though these cities have made America great, and though a city like New York can be said—especially in these last years, when it has become a world cultural capital—to have made America glorious, it does not follow, as we so naturally might think, that they have strengthened the fundaments of American democracy. Greatness and glory are things the human race has always prized highly, but we ought not to forget that the political philosophers of democracy have always looked upon them with distrust, as virtues appropriate to empires rather than to self-governing republics, and have emphasized moral earnestness and intellectual sobriety as elements that are most wanted in a democracy.

We can, perhaps, have a better appreciation of the problem we have created for ourselves if we start from the proposition—which sounds like a tautology but has far-reaching implications—that in a democracy the people are the ruling class. This does not mean, of course, that the people as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a whole run the affairs of state or that the people's will finds prompt expression in the decisions of government. Even in a society which is officially an aristocracy, the ruling class never has that kind of instant power and instant authority. Indeed, one suspects that a government which was *so* responsive would barely have the capacity to govern at all—and one knows for certain that, were such a government to exist, it could be manned only by servile mediocrities who set no value upon their own opinions or judgment. No, when one says that in a democracy the people are the ruling class, one means that the character of the government and the destiny of the nation are in the longer run determined by the character of the people rather than of any particular class of people.

I know that we are today unaccustomed to thinking in terms such as these, and that the very phrase, "the character of the people," has an odd ring to it. In part, this is because American political theory, as it has evolved into American political science, has tended to conceive of democracy exclusively in terms of procedural and mechanical arrangements—in terms of self-interested individuals who rightly understand that it is to their own interest to follow the "rules of the game." This idea goes back to the founding fathers, as has been said—but taken by itself, and divorced from the idea of republican morality, it leads to a self-destructive paradox, as some political scientists have recently come to realize. For when everyone follows the rules of the game, it can then be demonstrated—with all the rigor of a mathematical theorem—that it is to the self-interest of individuals or of organized factions *not* to follow the rules of the game, but simply to take advantage of the fact that the others do. That there are such individuals and factions, only too willing to draw this logical inference, and to act upon it, current American events vividly remind us. And political science, being "value-free," as they say, cannot come up with any persuasive arguments as to why they shouldn't act this way.

Another reason why we cannot seriously contemplate this question of "the character of the people" is that, in the generations which succeeded that of the founding fathers, it came to be believed that this character was not something formed by individual efforts at moral self-definition, but rather that the popular character was inherently good enough—not perfect perhaps, but good enough—so as not to require self-scrutiny. What we may call the transcendental-populist religion of democracy superseded an original political philosophy of democracy. This religion has now so strong a hold that mention of the very idea of a "corrupt people," a common idea in classical political philosophy, is taken as evidence of a nasty anti-democratic bias upon the part of the thinker who would dare entertain it. If things go wrong in our democracy, the persons we are least likely to blame are ourselves. Instead, we seek out the influence of wicked "vested interests," malign "outside agitators," or arrogant "Establishments."

I am not asserting that the American people, in this year 1970, are a corrupt people—though it worries me that they are so blandly free from self-doubt about this possibility. What I am saying is that they are more and more behaving in a way that would have alarmed the founding fathers even as it would have astonished them. To put it bluntly, they are more and more behaving like a collection of mobs.

THE term "mob," entered the language in the latter part of the 18th century, and was used to describe the new populations of the new industrial cities that were then emerging. This population was not only a population uprooted from its villages; it was also *déraciné* with regard to traditional pieties, whether religious, moral, or political. It was a population which felt itself—as in truth it largely was—the victim of external forces, in no way responsible for its own fate, and therefore indifferent to its own character. It was a population which, in its physical dependency, could be exploited by unscrupulous profiteers; it was a population which, in its political isolation, could be exploited by zealous demagogues; it was a population which, in its moral bewilderment, could be exploited by wild mystagogues; it was a population whose potential did not go much beyond riotous destructiveness.

It was because the founding fathers did not see how such a population could be capable of self-government that they took so dim a view of large cities. The "mob," as it was then to be seen in London and Paris, and even incipiently in New York or Boston, seemed to them the very antithesis of a democratic citizenry: a citizenry self-reliant, self-determining, and at least firmly touched by, if not thoroughly infused with, republican morality. It takes a transcendental-populist faith of truly enormous dimensions to find in this attitude a mere "agrarian bias." The founding fathers were philosophic men, of no such populist faith, and they had no qualms about insisting that popular government was sustained by "a people" as distinct from a mob.

The history of all modern industrial societies is the story of the gradual transformation of original urban mobs into a people, even as their numbers increased many fold. The secret behind this transformation was not faith but economics—and especially the economics of technological innovation. If it did not occur to the founding fathers that such a transformation was likely or even possible, this was because they could have no intimation of the fantastic economic growth that the coming century and a half would experience. It was not, indeed, until the turn of this century that thinking men began to be shaken loose from their Mal-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thusian spectacles and to be able to see things as they really were. Even so intelligent and liberal a thinker as E. L. Godkin, in several decades of writing for the *Nation*, could not disabuse himself of the notion that the lower urban classes were doomed to exist as something like a permanent mob by the iron laws of Malthusian doctrine. The politics of such a mob, obviously, could only be the politics of expropriation as against the bourgeois politics of participation.

Well, it worked out differently and better. As productivity increased, the urban mob became an urban citizenry—and, more recently, a suburban citizenry, mimicking in an urban context various aspects of that agrarian life style which was once thought to be of such political significance. The "bourgeois-ification" of society was *the* great event of modern history. Where once we had the bourgeois confronting the masses, we now have bourgeois masses—a fact which has been a source of concern to revolutionary romantics and romantic revolutionaries, both of whom have expectations for the masses which far outrun the bourgeois condition. Even many cautious liberals have been taken aback at the ease with which this society was breeding bourgeois men and women, and a small library of literature was published between 1945 and 1965 that complained of the "homogenization" of American society, of its passionless and conformist quality, of the oppressive weight of consensus, and of the disinclination to conflict and dissent.

That library is now gathering dust, along with the voluminous literature on the iron law of wages. For something very odd and unexpected has, in the past decade, been happening to the bourgeois masses who inhabit our new urban civilization. Though bourgeois in condition and lifestyle, they have become less bourgeois in ethos, and strikingly more mob-like in action. Perhaps this has something to do with a change in the economic character of our bourgeois civilization. Many critics have noted the shift from a producer's ethic (the so-called Protestant ethic) to a consumer's ethic, and go on to affirm that a bourgeois society of widespread affluence is in its essence radically different from a bourgeois society where scarcity automatically imposes a rigorous discipline of its own. This explanation is all the more plausible in that it echoes, in an academic way, the wisdom of the ages as to the corrupting effects of material prosperity upon the social order. Plato, it will be recalled, imagined the possibility of what, by his standards, constituted an affluent, acquisitive society that had no nobler purpose than the satisfaction of material needs and animal appetites. He called this, in the *Republic*, the "city of swine," and did not linger over the matter. Our own actuality is different, in all sorts of interesting and important ways, from Plato's crude model. He could not have imagined our condition—but, being a wise man, he could imagine the general consequences of our condition. The fact that these consequences come as so great a surprise to us—that, having created the kind of affluent society we deliberately aimed at, and having constructed the kind of "progressive" urban civilization we always wanted—that, having done all this, we have also created an unanticipated problem for ourselves, this fact is but a sign of our impoverished political imagination.

THE WAYS in which various strata of our citizenry—from the relatively poor to the relatively affluent—are beginning to behave like a bourgeois urban mob are familiar to anyone who reads his newspaper, and I do not propose to elaborate upon them. The interesting consideration is the extent to which a mob is not simply a physical presence but also, and above everything else, a state of mind. It is, to be precise, that state of mind which lacks all of those qualities that, in the opinion of the founding fathers, added up to republican morality: steadiness of character, deliberativeness of mind, and a mild predisposition to subordinate one's own special interests to the public interest. Since the founding fathers could not envisage a nation of bourgeois—a nation of urbanized, prosperous, and strongly acquisitive citizens—they located republican morality in the agrarian sector of American life. We, in this century, have relocated it in the suburban and small-city sector of American life—our contemporary version of America's "grass roots." And it now appears that our anticipations may be treated as roughly by history as were those of the founding fathers.

The causes for this dismaying reversal of expectations are only now being explored by our social critics. Lionel Trilling, especially, has pointed out how the avant-garde, anti-bourgeois, elite culture—what he calls "the adversary culture"—of our bourgeois society has been gradually incorporated into our conventional school curriculum and, with the spread of mass higher education, has begun to shape the popular culture of our urbanized masses. This is an ambiguous process toward which one can only have ambiguous feelings. No one, after all, can sincerely mourn the passing of the *Saturday Evening Post* and of that superficial, provincial, and, above all, philistine popular culture it so smugly affirmed. This culture may have contributed to political stability—but it also represented a spiritual torpor that, in the end, could only be self-defeating because it was so thin in its sense of humanity. On the other hand, there is something positively absurd in the spectacle of prosperous suburban fathers flocking to see—and evidently enjoying—*The Graduate*, or of prosperous, chic, suburban mothers unconcernedly humming "Mrs. Robinson" to themselves as they cheerfully drive off to do their duties as den mothers. This peculiar schizophrenia, suf-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fusing itself through the bourgeois masses of our urban society, may be fun while it lasts; but one may reasonably suppose that, sooner or later, people will decide they would rather not die laughing at themselves, and that some violent convulsions will ensue.

Why the very best art of bourgeois society—the work of our most gifted poets, painters, novelists, and dramatists—should have, and should have had from the very first days of the romantic movement, such an animus against its own bourgeois world, is a question one can only speculate on. Presumably it has something to do with the diminished role that disinterested social values, or transcendent religious values, play in a society governed by the principle of self-interest, even perhaps self-interest "rightly understood," but most especially self-interest that makes no effort at self-understanding or self-discipline. But if one can only speculate about the deeper causes of our present disorders, no subtle speculation is needed to see that a democratic-urban civilization which is empty of democratic-urban values is almost surely a civilization in trouble. The symptoms of this trouble plague us every day and in just about every way. If I dwell upon one such symptom, it is only because this one in particular strikes me as so perfectly signifying our inability—it may even be our unwillingness—to comprehend the role of "republican morality" in a democratic-urban civilization. I refer to the problems of drugs.

Now, I have no interest in venturing into the swamp of controversy that surrounds this topic in the conventional terms in which it is publicly discussed. I do not think it so important to ascertain which drugs are medically bad for you, or just how bad each one is. I think the problem of drugs would be just as serious even if it were determined that marijuana, or amphetamines, or LSD were medically harmless; or if some biochemist were to come up with a way to make these drugs—or even a drug like heroin—medically harmless. What makes a drug a truly serious problem is less its medical aspect than its social purpose. Cigarettes are bad for you, but cigarette-smoking poses no kind of threat to our society or to our civilization. Alcohol is likely to cause more harm than good to the average person, but the cocktail party is no threat to our society or our civilization. On the other hand, it is well to recollect that a century ago all social critics agreed that alcohol *was* such a threat, because it was being consumed by the new urban working class in such a way—not only to such a degree, but in such a way—as to demoralize this class and prevent its assimilation into bourgeois, democratic society.

And here we have arrived at the nub of the question as I see it. What counts is *why* drugs or intoxicants are taken, not whether they are. What counts is the meaning and moral status of the action, not its physiological dimensions. Alcohol ceased to be a public issue in this country when social drinking, for purposes of conviviality, succeeded gin-swilling whose aim was to get out of this world as rapidly as possible. With drugs, the reverse process has taken place. Drug addiction is not itself a new thing; the doctor who would take an occasional shot of morphine so as to be able to keep functioning, the elderly lady who relied upon an opium-laced patent medicine to keep her on her rounds of civic and familial activities—these are familiar enough figures in our past. But today drug-taking has become a mass habit—among our young masses especially—whose purpose is to secede from our society and our civilization; and such a declaration requires a moral answer, not a medical one.

Though the prohibition movement is now very censoriously treated by our American historians, one thing must be said for it: it not only knew the gin mills were medically bad—anyone could see that—it also knew *why* it was bad for a citizen to destroy himself in this way. It had *reasons* to offer, reasons that had to do with the importance of republican morality for those citizens of a self-governing nation—which is to say: the movement for prohibition had a good conscience, both social and moral. Today, in dismal contrast, even those, and they are certainly an overwhelming majority, who believe that the drug habit is bad, seem incapable of giving the reasons why. I mean the real reasons why—which have to do with the reasons why it is desirable to function as an autonomous and self-reliant citizen in our urban, democratic society, rather than to drift through life in a pleasant but enervating haze. The moral codes for all civilizations must, at one time or another, be prepared to face the ultimate subversive question: "Why not?" Our civilization is now facing that very question in the form of the drug problem—and, apparently, it can only respond with tedious, and in the end ineffectual, medical reports.

It is this startling absence of values that represents the authentic "urban crisis" of our democratic, urban nation. The fact that the word "urbanity" applies both to a condition of urban things and a state of urban mind may be an accident of philology—but if so it is a happy accident, for it reminds us of the interdependence of mind and thing. That same interdependence is to be found in the word, "democracy," referring as it does simultaneously to a political system and to the spirit—the idea—that animates this system. The challenge to our urban democracy is to evolve a set of values and a conception of democracy that can function as the equivalent of the "republican morality" of yesteryear. This is our fundamental urban problem. Or, in the immortal words of Pogo: "I have seen the enemy and they is us."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Can Anti-Semitism Be Measured?

Lucy S. Dawidowicz

With regard to anti-Semitism I don't really want to search for explanations; I feel a strong inclination to surrender to my affects in this matter and find myself confirmed in my wholly non-scientific belief that mankind on the average and taken by and large are a wretched lot.

—Sigmund Freud, in a letter to Arnold Zweig, December 2, 1927

IN AN AGE when sociological scrutiny seems to extend into the most obscure corners of our experience, it may come as a surprise to learn that the phenomenon of anti-Semitism—one of the more enduring of social phenomena and, needless to say, one of special significance in our own time—has received scant attention from American social scientists. The apathy of the sociologists has been matched by the indifference of the great foundations, whose general view has been that anti-Semitism is (or should be) a parochial concern. Be that as it may, it is to the American Jewish organizations that we are indebted for whatever studies of consequence exist. The latest studies, sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League, have appeared in a series called "Patterns of American Prejudice," undertaken in conjunction with the Survey Research Center of the University of California at Berkeley.

The ADL series evokes resonances of the past. Some twenty years ago the American Jewish Committee sponsored another series, the five-volume "Studies in Prejudice," whose research was conducted jointly by the University of California Berkeley Public Opinion Study (no connection with the present Survey Research Center) and the Institute of Social Research, then at Columbia University in exile from its original home in Frankfurt am Main. It should be noted that in the period between the appearance of the two series, no other serious work on anti-Semitism in the United States was published, with the exception of *Jews in the Mind of America*, by Charles Stember and others (also sponsored by the American Jewish Committee; Basic Books, 1966).

Four volumes of a projected eight in the ADL series, all published by Harper & Row, have so far been produced: *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism*, by Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark (1966); *The Apathetic Majority: A Study Based on Public Responses to the Eichmann Trial*, by Charles Y. Glock, Gertrude J. Selznick, and Joe L. Spaeth (1966); *Protest and Prejudice: A Study of Belief in the Black Community*, by Gary T. Marx (1967); and *The Tenacity of Prejudice: Anti-Semitism in Contemporary America*, by Gertrude J. Selznick and Stephen Steinberg (1969).

The first of the four volumes probed the opinions and attitudes of 3,000 church members on the relation of their Christian beliefs to anti-Semitism, and discovered that one-fourth of those professing anti-Semitic attitudes based their prejudice on what they took to be Christian teaching.* The second book, which set itself the task of finding out whether public interest in the Eichmann trial bore any relation to anti-Semitism, is really too slight and inconclusive an effort to merit extended discussion. For the record, suffice it to note that of the 460 Oakland, California residents who were interviewed by the authors in the summer of 1961, 84 per cent had heard of the trial, but only 59 per cent knew that Eichmann was a Nazi; and only 33 per cent knew that six million was the standard estimate of the number of Jews killed by the Nazis. I shall, therefore, deal here chiefly with the two most recent books in the series. Of these, *The Tenacity of Prejudice* is the more ambitious effort. Based on lengthy interviews conducted in October 1964 with about 2,000 respondents—a representative sampling of Americans by age, sex, education, income, race, religion, and region—it sought to gauge the extent of anti-Semitic feeling in the United States. As for Gary Marx's *Protest and Prejudice*, it is a by-product, so to speak, of the riots in Negro slums in 1964; "Patterns of Prejudice" did not originally envisage an investigation of black anti-Semitism, but the seemingly anti-Jewish features of the riots, as directed at Jewish merchants in the ravaged communities, prompted the addition to the series.

These studies, as noted, have been carried out

LUCY S. DAWIDOWICZ, a frequent contributor to these pages, has recently been appointed to the Paul and Leah Lewis chair in Holocaust Studies at Yeshiva University.

*See the review by Sidney Monas, COMMENTARY, December 1966.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for the ADL by the Survey Research Center at Berkeley. Survey research, or survey analysis, as it is more commonly called—which I shall have occasion to discuss in greater detail below—can briefly be described as the technique of interpreting data gathered from interviews. It endeavors to identify and isolate the significant causal factors ("independent variables") of a given phenomenon and to determine how these affect the pattern of behavior under examination. Which is precisely what Gertrude Selznick and Stephen Steinberg, the authors of *The Tenacity of Prejudice*, set out to do with regard to anti-Semitism. Drawing up a series of negative statements about Jews, they constructed an "Index of Anti-Semitic Belief" which they submitted for comment to the 2,000 respondents. Included were such questions as: are Jews "clannish"; "dishonest in business"; "disloyal to America"; "powerful in finance and government." One-third of the respondents denied that Jews fit any of the unflattering descriptions. Another third subscribed to only a few of these commonly held anti-Semitic notions (Jewish clannishness proved the most popular). The final third, endorsing varied clusters of the proferred opinions, checked in with a pronounced strain of anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, most people who registered high on the index did not express any appreciable approval of political anti-Semitism.

Selznick and Steinberg then proceeded to locate anti-Semitism according to population patterns. Young people, they found, tended to be less prejudiced than their elders, native Americans less than foreign-born. "Liberal" Protestants (Congregationalists and Episcopalians) and Catholics proved less biased than "conservative" Protestants (Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans). Geographically speaking, the greater concentration of anti-Semitism, it was discovered, was in the rural South and Midwest, regions with the least educated and most fundamentalist populations. Indeed, education turned out to be a more significant determinant of anti-Semitism than social class: the poorly educated registered more anti-Semitic than the well educated, regardless of income or occupational status. Yet among the college-educated, the authors learned, the higher the status and income, the greater the prevalence of anti-Semitic attitudes. Negroes, the index showed, responded no differently from whites, except with regard to the "economic" portion of the questionnaire; twice as many Negroes as whites believed that Jews were dishonest and exploitative in business practices. Also, unlike the situation prevailing among the white respondents, where greater youth and higher education tended to reduce the level of anti-Semitism, among Negroes the opposite pattern obtained.

Education, or the lack of it, the authors were certain, was *the* independent variable in determining the extent of anti-Semitic bias. Yet the relation between education and anti-Semitism, though strong, turned out to be imperfect: there was still a persistence of anti-Semitism among educated people, white and black. Selznick and Steinberg probed a variety of related factors in search of the culprit—the level of educational sophistication, exposure to the mass media, tolerance of cultural diversity, and, of course, authoritarianism and *anomie*. Still, correlations, where they appeared, suggested not a causal relationship but rather a syndrome.

In sum, 16 per cent of the respondents were revealed to be consistently free of anti-Semitic prejudice, rejecting anti-Jewish stereotypes, opposing social discrimination, and declaring they would vote against an anti-Semitic candidate. At the opposite end of the opinion scale were the 5 to 10 per cent who could be characterized as out-and-out anti-Semites. The majority occupied the vast middle ground, not favoring anti-Semitism but lacking in determination to oppose any of its manifestations. Anti-Semitism, Selznick and Steinberg concluded, is widespread in the United States, though not in virulent form. For rectification, they looked to educational institutions, which, with all their shortcomings, "are the primary means whereby the individual is integrated into the ideal norms and values that constitute and sustain a democratic and humane society."

For Gary T. Marx, the study of anti-Semitism, even within his more specialized context, was secondary. His primary concern in *Protest and Prejudice* was to examine the climate of opinion in the black community regarding the civil-rights movement; Negro attitudes toward Jews were of subsidiary interest. In October 1964, he interviewed over 1,000 Negro adults in various parts of the country, North and South. To probe the depth and extent of civil-rights militancy and/or extremism in the black community, Marx fashioned a survey-analysis index which revealed most Negroes to be moderates, overwhelmingly rejecting black nationalism. And, like his illustrious namesake, he too found religion to be the opiate of the people, encouraging quietism rather than protest.

As for anti-Semitism, Marx certified from his data that most blacks were not anti-Semitic, or, at any rate, not more so than whites. Three out of ten non-Southern Negroes (a higher proportion than the Southerners) registered as anti-Semitic on Marx's index. Most Negroes (75 per cent) thought Jews were neither better nor worse than white Christians, while 20 per cent said Jews were better, and 5 per cent, worse. By this calculation Marx concluded that "*Jews were seen in a more favorable light than other whites by a four-to-one ratio*" (italics in the original). Comparing his data with those of the Selznick-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Steinberg study, Marx at first found no consistent pattern of differences between blacks and whites in anti-Semitic attitudes, but an "Index of Predisposition to Economically Based Anti-Semitism" showed that Negroes registered high. Marx explained the prevalence of such anti-Semitism as the consequence of the blacks' "actual experiences with Jews in the economic world." "While Negro anti-Semitism is deplorable," he summed up, "it certainly is more *understandable* than white anti-Semitism" (my italics—L.D.).

II

IN THE social sciences, questions of methodology are inextricably linked with questions of substance. Before proceeding further, we might therefore do well to consider the subject of survey analysis, a matter of no small pertinence to our discussion in view of the fact that the particular technique has established itself as dominant in the sociological investigation of American anti-Semitism. Is survey analysis an adequate tool for the study of a phenomenon as complex as anti-Semitism? To what extent has survey analysis itself affected the conceptualization of the problem? Finally, do the studies represent survey analysis at its best? Some answers to these questions, I trust, will emerge from the discussion that follows.

Survey analysis developed out of two diverse but not unrelated fields, market research and the study of propaganda. As new interviewing and statistical techniques were developed to elicit, describe, and measure public opinion on a wide range of matters, *vox populi*, hitherto absent from social or historical records, became a source of scientific information. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, author of the pathbreaking work *The People's Choice* (a study of the 1940 Presidential election), is generally acknowledged as the founder of survey analysis. His contributions to the discipline include the development of sophisticated mathematical formulas to study the interrelation of assembled data; the invention of the "panel," a body of respondents whom surveyors periodically reinterview; contextual analysis; and indeed the whole apparatus of survey analysis—administration, training, data-gathering, analysis, publication, even funding. Not content with a technique that depended solely on statistical data and quantification for its findings and insights, Lazarsfeld has always been aware of the need to diversify. In 1933, the year of his arrival in United States from Germany, he set down, in a paper entitled "Principles of Sociography," four basic methodological rules:*

a. For any phenomenon one should have objective observations as well as introspective reports.
b. Case studies should be properly combined with statistical information.
c. Contemporary information should be supplemented by information on earlier phases of whatever is being studied.
d. One should combine "natural and experimental data." By experimental, I meant mainly questionnaires and solicited reports, while by natural, I meant what is now called "unobtrusive measures"—data deriving from daily life without interference from the investigator.

It would be unfair to demand that the survey analysts of the "Patterns in American Prejudice" series adhere to the ideal standards that the master himself could not always observe. Still, I, for one, found the reliance on survey data, in both *Protest and Prejudice* and *The Tenacity of Prejudice*, to the near exclusion of other data, intellectually constricting. Marx, to be sure, occasionally drew upon literary, historical, and journalistic sources, but then, as if to retain survey-analysis purity in his text, he relegated this material to footnotes. Selznick and Steinberg used even fewer auxiliary sources. Their various findings must therefore stand or fall entirely on the basis of the quantitative empirical data. Yet how does one measure the extent and intensity of anti-Semitism? Is there a National Bureau of Standards for the study of social phenomena which has specified the standard content, density, or weight of anti-Semitism?

In survey analysis, the standard measuring procedure for all phenomena is scaling. The scale, or index, can be constructed from a collection of statements, as we have seen, to which respondents are asked to register assent or disagreement, indicating also the degree of response ("a lot," "a little," "not at all"). Each item is designed to elicit a specific attitude or opinion, and their grouping reflects the conception that certain attitudes and opinions form a single general outlook. The critical process involved in constructing a scale lies in the selection and formulation of items that will provide a valid continuum and thus serve as an accurate and sensitive measuring device. The items selected for the scale naturally reflect the surveyors' hypotheses about the significant variables under study. Formulation of the items, too, obviously entails problems, since the wording can influence the response. After the scale items are finally drawn up, techniques for the testing of validity are applied, designed to enforce the scale's empirical objectivity.

As should be evident, in good survey analysis everything depends on the ingenuity of the scale. How good then is the anti-Semitism scale of the ADL studies? Unfortunately, no one thought to draw up a *uniform* scale that might be applied to all the surveys in the series and that might

* Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "An Episode in the History of Social Research: A Memoir," in Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, eds., *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960* (Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 282-83.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

therefore yield a more scientific understanding of the varieties of anti-Semitism. Instead we are given a patchwork of scales, with each study constructing a different index, using different items, in different quantities, often differently formulated. *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism* used six items for its index; *The Apathetic Majority*, three; *Protest and Prejudice*, nine; and *The Tenacity of Prejudice*, eleven (seven of Marx's items were the same as Selznick and Steinberg's). Of the various authors, Marx alone employed "positive" items, that is, items favorable toward Jews. ("Positive" items, the experts tell us, are more likely to elicit the accepted "tolerant" responses and are thus less satisfactory in tapping hostile attitudes.)

Given this variety, what is one to make of the different indices? Are the scales of Glock, Marx, Steinberg and Selznick, *et al.* comparable to the Fahrenheit, Celsius, and Réaumur scales—that is, although they use different measuring units, do they measure the same phenomenon? Are the anti-Semitism scales interchangeable and their findings convertible? Obviously not, for anti-Semitism has no commonly accepted boiling or freezing point; no standard weights or intervals have been assigned to religious anti-Semitism, political anti-Semitism, economic anti-Semitism, authoritarianism, or ethnocentrism. Altogether, the disparity among the various scales raises serious doubts as to their validity. That the Survey Research Center made no attempt to standardize a scale to measure anti-Semitism is not very reassuring; nor is the fact that barely any use was made of the pioneer anti-Semitism scale developed in the early 1940's by Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford for *The Authoritarian Personality*. That scale, of 52 items, among other things, distinguished between opinions and attitudes, and probed different images of Jews as individuals/group/culture.

III

A CLAIM OF survey analysis is that it can transcend the surveyor's subjective hypotheses. Yet, in the very construction of the apparatus for the gathering and measuring of empirical data, subjectivity inevitably plays a role and must, in the end, color the findings themselves. The fiction of total impartiality in social research has recently come under attack by, among others, Gunnar Myrdal, who in the interest of honesty and greater objectivity has made the suggestion—in which I concur—that social scientists disclose the personal and political values underlying their search.* This is a tricky business, however. Values may at times be so deeply internalized that the researcher has genuine difficulties in standing aside and acknowledging them. Even the selection of topics shelters subjective viewpoints and values that can infiltrate research, sometimes innocently and subconsciously, occasionally with the intention to influence and manipulate. The reader is at a loss. He does not have even the poker player's option to pay to see the bidder's hand.

The Tenacity of Prejudice is a good example of how the researchers' premises—in this case, with regard to what constitutes the ideal society—have led to a misreading of the data. Selznick and Steinberg, it will be recalled, concluded that education was the independent variable in anti-Semitism, even though anti-Semitism continued to persist among the educated. That irregularity was most pronounced in the following items designed to measure intolerance: attitudes of non-Jews toward intermarriage with Jews; toward the exclusion of Jews from social clubs; and toward the continued observance of Christmas in the public schools. Respondents who otherwise came out very low on the anti-Semitism scale, here registered "intolerant"; in fact, the more educated a respondent, the greater the level of his intolerance. As already noted, the authors looked for assorted explanations, but the data nevertheless remained intractable.

The fault, I suggest, lies not in the data but in the attitudes held by Selznick and Steinberg about the nature of American society and of group relations. These attitudes are nowhere set forth explicitly, but are revealed by a close reading of their approach to the data. We see, for instance, that they consider a Christian intolerant if he is against intermarriage with a Jew. By the goose/gander rule, they must therefore also regard as intolerant Jews who are opposed to intermarriage. In so doing, however, they are forced to ignore considerations that apply with far greater weight to Jews than to American Christians. By making approval of intermarriage a barometer of tolerance, Selznick and Steinberg must logically regard a commitment to group survival as an obstruction to the creation of a prejudice-free, neutral society. Oddly enough, for a study that purports to gauge anti-Semitic feeling, nowhere is an effort made to deal with the question of the legitimacy of group life, religious or ethnic. Selznick and Steinberg seem to believe that anti-Semitism must be combatted because it is the ultimate obstacle to Jewish assimilation. Jewish survivalists, on the other hand, start from the premise that anti-Semitism constitutes a peril to Jewish continuity.

If their commitment to the neutral society has caused them to misread their data, the enthrallment of Selznick and Steinberg with education distorts their conclusions. Indeed, the emphasis on education as *the* countervailing force to prejudice exposes the weakness of this method of relying exclusively on attitudes and opinions without referring to ancillary or supplementary con-

**Objectivity in Social Research*, Pantheon, 1969.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

siderations, such as the capacity of social and political institutions to absorb and neutralize group conflict. Moreover, nothing that one has learned from contemporary and historical sources supports confidence in the healing properties of education in overcoming prejudice. And nowadays especially, when a college education is no longer a bulwark against the superstitions of astrology, when propaganda of the Third World and *Al Fatah* can flourish on college campuses as the New Received Truth, and when rationalism on the campuses is not only straight and square but dead, we can scarcely depend on educational institutions to provide defenses against the blandishments of ethnic prejudice.

GARY MARX makes no bones about the values he holds. In the preface to *Protest and Prejudice,* he writes:

> With respect to my own values, I have been involved in the civil rights struggle and am concerned with the issues of which this book treats. The effect of my personal concerns on the analysis of the data has, I hope, been minimal. However, someone with a different commitment might have written a different book.

The message is even more explicitly spelled out in the dedication, which reads:

> To those oppressed because of their racial, religious, or ethnic identity in the hope that they will become more militant and more tolerant and thus transcend evils so long and cruelly perpetrated by man on man

It therefore comes as no surprise, given his "commitment," that Marx should have produced a thoroughly tendentious piece of work, which, when all is said and done, stands as an uncritical apology for black militancy. (The *tendenz* is further adumbrated early in the book when the author, in another lapse from social-science cool, enthusiastically endorses Malcolm X's highly ideological description of American society as "the American Nightmare.") Such a partisan approach, of course, is not likely to view the black militants as engaging, in thought or deed, in violence and racism; by Marx's criteria, anti-social behavior can be explained simply as justified protest: *tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*—an attitude better suited to social workers, perhaps, than to social scientists.

Marx's text is distinguished throughout by a tension, to borrow Guenther Roth's phrase, "between partisanship and scholarship." Which raises a question about his techniques. Were the scales he devised intended to buttress his predictions or were they merely slipshod efforts? For example, Marx constructed an "Index of Conventional Militancy," meaning "the kind of militancy manifested by the conventional civil-rights groups in 1964." It consisted of the following eight items (the "militant" response appears in parenthesis):

1. A restaurant owner should not have to serve Negroes if he doesn't want to. (Disagree.)
2. An owner of property should not have to sell to Negroes if he doesn't want to. (Disagree.)
3. Before Negroes are given equal rights, they have to show that they deserve them. (Disagree.)
4. Negroes who want to work hard can get ahead just as easily as anyone else. (Disagree.)
5. In your opinion, is the government in Washington pushing integration too slow, too fast, or about right? (Too slow.)
6. Negroes should spend more time praying and less time demonstrating. (Disagree.)
7. To tell the truth, I would be afraid to take part in civil rights demonstrations. (Disagree.)
8. Would you like to see more demonstrations or less [*sic*] demonstrations? (More.)

Agreement with the first four items registered as bigotry—but is militancy the converse of bigotry? And the last four items, while more germane than the first to civil-rights "militancy," have an antiquated ring about them, even for the dark ages of 1964. That was the year, after all, of the Mississippi Freedom Summer, which was supported by the full spectrum of civil-rights groups. Up North, the moderate ("conventional") groups were all under pressure from the militants, and the militants in turn were under pressure from extremists. Yet Marx's militancy scale—whose items tread rather gingerly, it seems to me—registered most respondents as moderate rather than militant, even in New York, even in Chicago. Blacks in Atlanta were less militant than their counterparts in Birmingham. Nothing, it seemed, was what it appeared to be. Was the index at fault? Was the sample at fault? Were the interviewers at fault?*

Another example: Marx's "Index of Support for Black Nationalism" consisted of the following four items: (1) refusal to fight for the United States in the event of a war; (2) giving American Negroes their own state; (3) singling out the Black Muslims as a group doing the most to help Negroes; (4) singling out Malcolm X as the leader doing the most to help his people. The data disclosed that less than one per cent of the respondents agreed with three or more of the statements, leading Marx to conclude, somewhat triumphantly, that "reports of a 'rising tide' of black nationalism . . . were widely misleading." Meanwhile, social researchers at UCLA, studying as-

*In 1968 George Gallup scrapped a poll his organization had conducted in Harlem for the New York *Times*. Reporters on a follow-up story discovered that two interviewers had falsified some of the data. Carolyn Atkinson, doing a pilot study in New York City of Negro attitudes toward Jews, commissioned by the American Jewish Committee through Columbia's Bureau of Applied Social Research, discovered that one of her interviewers had falsified a whole set of interviews with young black militants.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pects of the Watts riot, found that 30 per cent of their respondents indicated signs of black militancy.* Their measuring devices differed from Marx's; but when the UCLA researchers administered Marx's scale to their Los Angeles respondents, the latter's black militancy evaporated.

The radical shifts in the civil-rights movement have, of course, turned Marx's sociology of the black community in 1964 into ancient history. Was he an innocent victim of unpredictable change? The folk-wisdom cautions: Forewarned is forearmed. The one constant characteristic of the civil-rights movement since the Supreme Court decision of 1954 has been change. In 1955 the Montgomery bus boycott catapulted Martin Luther King, Jr., into national prominence; in 1960 Negro college students organized the first sit-ins in North Carolina; in 1963, the March on Washington gave the highest national sanction to civil-rights protest and demonstration. A year later, the urban riots began. Given the fact of change, it remains a mystery why Marx did not avail himself of the protection that survey analysis provides through the techniques of sociological prediction. Prediction for social action is really what sociology is all about, at least to its activists. Comte's *savoir pour prévoir* still remains the sociological watchword.

In 1964, as in 1960 when the sit-ins began, young, college-educated Negroes provided the impetus for the changing patterns of black protest. Yet Marx sampled young and educated blacks only randomly. Only 13 per cent of his respondents had some college education; only 22 per cent were eighteen to twenty-nine years old. Had Marx, extrapolating from the trend of young, college-educated militants, drawn a larger sample of this group, his survey might have had more validity. Indeed, the role of strategic elites in influencing social behavior calls into question the usefulness of studies of mass opinion in some contexts. Such studies minimize the roles of opinion-molders, political leaders, and social activists, and blur the selective impact of propaganda. In his postscript to the paperback edition of *Protest and Prejudice*,† Marx at last confronts this problem. His final paragraph delivers a *coup de grâce* not only to his own study, but to the entire enterprise of "Patterns in American Prejudice":

> *The important questions are clearly not so much how many, but who, how intensively, and in what way?* As the unprecedented domestic violence in the late 1960's and the changing tone of much black-white dialogue indicates, playing the numbers game with public-opinion data can be conducive to highly unrealistic assessments. . . . "Mass" in polls of black opinion can be an umbrella concept for a highly diverse collectivity which includes the youthful unskilled and unemployed, and ideologically articulate college students, as well as a great many older, more passive people. Everyone's opinion does not count the same, and opinions are changing—if not fast enough for the most radical, certainly much too fast for the most conservative. (Italics in the original.)

IV

Let us return to the subject of black anti-Semitism. In opening his discussion of this subject, Marx immediately takes the sting out of the problem by remarking that "anti-Semitism is a 'normal' aspect of our culture" and a component of "our common culture" —shared, that is, by white and black alike. (Would he, I wonder, characterize racism as "normal" in the same way?) Attitudes, he adds, are "fashioned from experiences," and "for Negroes, anti-Semitic stereotypes appear to be much more related to actual experiences with Jews in the economic world"—hence, while Negro anti-Semitism is to be "deplored," it is also, according to Marx (and as I have already noted), "certainly . . . more understandable than white anti-Semitism." In confusing attitudes with social realities, and in assigning to subjective feelings the authority of objectivity, Marx would seem to have fallen into a trap that critics of survey analysis have long warned of. The late Theodor Adorno, who never cared much for survey research anyway, put it this way: "What was axiomatic according to the prevalent rule of social research, namely, to proceed from the subjects' reactions as if they were a primary and final source of sociological knowledge, seemed to me thoroughly superficial and misguided."** The formation of attitudes is a complex matter to which experience, of course, contributes. But anti-Semitism, like all prejudices, is also a creature of propaganda and of indoctrination in centuries-old hatreds; its unhappy recrudescence in some black literature today is a phenomenon which Marx ignores altogether.

Marx's treatment of black anti-Semitism is in general on the capricious side. He begins by minimizing its existence; then he changes course to say that, yes, there is anti-Semitism in the black community, but that it derives from experience; finally, in a third shift, he maintains that the anti-Semitism in question is but a reflection of Negro hostility toward all whites. In one of his extra-survey-analysis footnotes, however, Marx himself offers evidence to refute this last contention—a passage from Claude Brown's *Manchild*

*See T. M. Tomlinson, "Ideological Foundations for Negro Action: A Comparative Analysis of Militant and Non-Militant Views of the Los Angeles Riot"; and T. M. Tomlinson and Diana L. TenHouten, "Method: Negro Reaction Survey," *Los Angeles Riot Study*, Institute of Government and Public Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles, June 1, 1967.

†Harper Torchbook, 1969.

**Theodor W. Adorno, "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America," in Fleming and Bailyn, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in the Promised Land which would seem to indicate that blacks do distinguish between Jews and other whites. Negro folklore, says Brown, pictures all white people as mean and stingy: if a man is more mean than he is stingy, he is white—Christian or cracker; if he is more stingy than mean, he's a Jew. The sophistication of this piece of folklore should be sufficiently conclusive to indicate that black anti-Semitism is exactly that and nothing else, harking back as it does to the stereotype of the Jew as swindler and exploiter, as ancient a stereotype as that of the Jew as Christ-killer. The new articulateness of today's American blacks—many of whom form an uprooted peasantry becoming urbanized—simply gives fresh currency in the United States to one of Europe's oldest myths. It is indeed only in terms of the myth that one can understand the psychological process that makes this urban peasantry blame the Jews, rather than other ethnic groups whose occupational roles afflict Negroes far more severely than do Jewish merchants and landlords. The salience of the Jew as Jew, not as merchant or landlord, sets the dynamics of prejudice moving. And it is the myth, more than the experience, which makes it possible for young blacks today to parrot the pseudo-scientific mouthings of anti-Semites in Germany and Austria of one hundred years ago.

In 1968, when anti-Jewish fulminations on the part of various black militant groups rose to a particularly strident pitch, there were many, including Jews, who sought to minimize the significance of what was being said. This was not surprising. Nor was it surprising that these apologists should have adduced *Protest and Prejudice,* with its imposing array of statistics and tables, all at the service of "scientific, objective truth," in support of their contention: that black anti-Semitism was of no significance; that where it existed it was deserved; and that, in any event, Jews weren't being singled out as Jews but as whites. Finally, *Protest and Prejudice* was invoked as evidence for the "fact" that blacks were not even particularly anti-Semitic, at any rate not more so than whites, and perhaps less so. The use of the "protective authority" of science, in Max Weber's phrase, to advance partisan commitments is, of course, nothing new. Still, it was saddening to see yet another instance of scholarship pressed into the service of ideology, even if Gary Marx's effort lent itself only too readily to the purpose at hand. Perhaps more distressing is the apparent concurrence of other social scientists in the political uses of scholarship.

V

SURVEY ANALYSIS even at its best, free from intrusive values and obtrusive politics, is, with its single focus on opinion, not properly geared to study the etiology of anti-Semitism. Useful for periodic pulse-taking, it nevertheless serves ultimately to limit our understanding of anti-Semitism, which is a phenomenon marked by a high degree of multiformity and contradictoriness. A pariah people everywhere for most of their history, Jews have been persecuted for believing in Judaism and excoriated for disbelieving; despised when poor and loathed when rich; shamed for their ignorance of the host culture and rebuffed for mastering it; denounced as capitalists and assailed as Communists; derided for their separatism and reviled for their assimilationism. In the course of its long life, anti-Semitism has also assumed pseudo-rational guises, e.g., the Christian "teachings of contempt," the theories of alleged Jewish economic control and manipulation, the ideologies of alleged Jewish political domination or cultural pollution. The very persistence of anti-Semitism, as Shmuel Ettinger of the Hebrew University recently has argued, consolidates and intensifies the syndrome. Historical precedents, historical folk memory—these, almost inevitably, have at various times combined with other factors to make the Jews expedient scapegoats and expendable victims (as witness the most recent resurgence of anti-Semitism in Poland, where only 8,000 Jews remain in a population of 32 million).

Studying anti-Semitism as strictly an American phenomenon, without reference to its occurrence elsewhere in time and geography, strikes me as a highly provincial exercise. The specificity of anti-Semitism in America, to be sure, rests in indigenous political traditions and institutions, and it is important to know how these have affected certain forms of anti-Semitism,* but the themes, images, and ideas from which anti-Semitism draws its force have throughout history been transnational and transcultural. (Thus, the imported racist theories of Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain played a part in the passage of the restrictive immigration laws of the 1920's in the United States.) Indeed, anti-Semitic mythology often assumes a life of its own, with its own peculiar pattern of migration. The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* consigned yesterday to the ash-heap of history, has today been resurrected for use by Arab propagandists. And the 18th-century European myth of the Illuminati, a somewhat less notorious variant on the theme of the international conspiracy, still persists in our own day, feeding the anti-Semitic prejudices of many a home-grown American bigot.

Survey analysis, in my opinion, is by its nature unequipped to investigate the historic images and themes of anti-Semitism which still flourish in the American variety, or to trace their passage from one culture to another. How, then, can survey analysis, all by itself and without the

* A forthcoming book in the "Patterns of American Prejudice" series, by Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, will probably deal with these questions.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

support of other disciplines, be expected to perform the more difficult but necessary task of locating a specific variety of anti-Semitism within a meaningful historical continuum? Time, in the two books we have been discussing, was frozen at October 1964, when the interviews were conducted. But what does that date represent? Was October 1964 part of a continuing stable time, a time of long duration and slow motion? Was it part of a deceptive slow-motion time, continuously interrupted by abrupt crises? Or was it cyclical time, regular or irregular? Or retarded time—time-lagging time? Or explosive time?* Society is in constant motion, yet social time is marked by intervals of different duration. Do opinions and attitudes match the patterns of societal time? Are they behind or ahead? Do they reflect a period's decline or beginning, or even a period in flux?

In *Jews in the Mind of America*, Ben Halpern elucidated a persuasive theory of a perennial syndrome called anti-Semitism, "compounded of simultaneous or alternating toleration and hostility." That syndrome exists in the time of Jewish history. But other rhythms of time flow outside and around, as well as through, Jewish history, quickening or retarding Jewish time. For instance, a new theory of cyclical societal expansion in the United States, propounded by P.M.G. Harris, claims:†

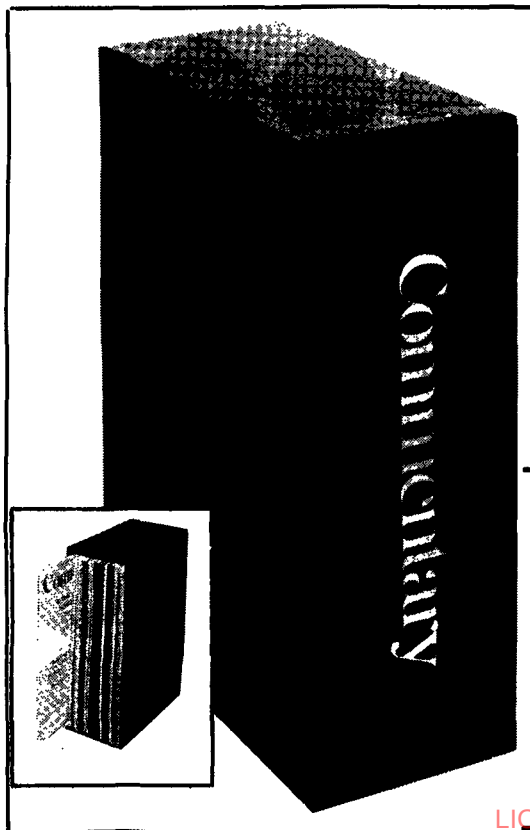
> It turns out that not just the bread and butter in our society since 1870 . . . but the essence of American social structure—linking personal opportunity, community growth, institutional development, and societal change—since its very inception has always reflected, and re-created, cyclical fluctuations in rate of expansion of our population.

Drawing from many academic disciplines, theories, and research methods, in a complex demographic-historical study that locates, identifies, and describes cyclical fluctuations, Harris concludes that there appears to be a 22½-year cycle of oscillating socio-economic conditions in America, with concomitant wide-ranging effects on the family, socialization, life-cycles, educational and economic opportunity. The "mood of the nation," Harris declares, "also goes through swings or cycles adhering closely to the familiar interval." Is it not possible that anti-Semitic prejudice, too, is woven into the tapestry of this cycle, and should not social scientists address themselves to investigating this possibility?

It is to be hoped that subsequent volumes in the "Patterns of American Prejudice" series will contribute more to our understanding of anti-Semitism in America than their four predecessors. Perhaps if survey researchers were to yield some of their disciplinary autonomy and sovereignty and begin to share the insights of other fields of study, their work might progress beyond the commonplace and self-indulgent. Certainly, the study of anti-Semitism is too serious a matter to be left to the exclusive attention of survey analysts.

*See Georges Gurvitch, "Social Structure and the Multiplicity of Time," in Edward A. Tiryakian, ed., *Sociological Theory, Values, and Sociocultural Change* (Harper, 1967).

†P.M.G. Harris, "The Social Origins of American Leaders: The Demographic Foundations," *Perspectives in American History*, III (1969), p. 311.



SPECIAL OFFER

A convenient way to keep all your issues of Commentary together and easily available for quick reference.

Perfect Size (9x12) for Your Bookcase

Slipcase is of blue Boltaflex—"Commentary" stamped in gold leaf on its cover. Holds 12 issues.

Special Price: $4.50

2 for $7.95 5 for $17.95

COMMENTARY
165 E. 56th Street, New York, N. Y. 10022

Gentlemen:

Please send me the Commentary Slipcase.

☐ One for $4.50 ☐ Two for $7.95 ☐ Five for $17.95

☐ I enclose check or money order in amount of $_____
(Commentary pays postage and handling.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On the Passage of Time

Peter Berlinrut

WHAT GOES and what stays? What has changed and what is the same, and if there is any way of assessing the change, what is the referent we can use to measure it? I feel the question as I sit here on this bench in the Square in about the same spot where I sat forty-six years ago. The benches have been shifted and the paved walks have been rerouted and repaved, the traffic is no longer allowed across the park, but still it is the same park. It was one of the locales of my youth. Across a stretch of time so tortuous and long that I can barely recognize it as within my experience, I haul a scene into view: a tug-of-war between sophomores and freshmen of the university nearby, with the losers incurring the penalty of being pulled into the knee-deep waters of the fountain. I was with the freshmen and vaguely I recall the contest as episodic and fitful. No, it isn't easy to sit here and devise a telescope that can reach down that fearfully long corridor and make out that wriggling speck at the other end as myself, especially with the corridor taking a number of tricky bends. Memory does it, memory, that performer of feats almost bloodcurdling in their virtuosity.

The time has gone, all right. It is no longer 1923. The pigeons that alighted on the walks in a hunt for free food are long dead and gone since that October. The aging shoeshine man, a Greek homosexual who used to gaze up at his clients with a wet sad eye in the hope of a more intimate transaction, is gone, too. I have to hold myself back from reading a roster of vanished items that would soon get too long and too achey. Where, then, has the time gone? The history book, the magazines, and the newspapers all tell quite reliably where the social time went. I feel no reason to pit my personal memory in competition with the record in print, patchy as it may be here or there. Nor do I have any mandate, as I read my mood, to lavish attention in detail on my personal past, instructive as that might be. No, the time has gone and the sense of its passing as I have it now is not planted in a remembrance of important social events nor of personal history. It is something else. I let my eye come to rest on the new roof-line on the south side of the Square, so changed now that the university has it, and the only idea I have is: I have lived, I remember, I am constant. To say less would leave me unnamed in some painful way and to say more would bow me down with supererogatory effort.

I am free now to bear witness to the silence all around me, musical, unhurried again, just about as it was the first time I ever sat here. The noise of the traffic, the intermittent grunt of a crane engine somewhere in the vicinity, the footsteps of passers-by (I have closed my eyes to mimimize the visual distractions) reach me from a distance. There are three main stages in the continuity of life—before, during, and after—and at the present moment all three are equally weighted, all three are totally aligned like so many billiard balls, so that my time sense does not obtrude from the present moment by so much as a hair's-breadth.

It is therefore with the freest kind of mind that I muse, where has the time gone? I couldn't be more unanxious as I ask, where did it go? I am inclined to answer myself the way Ma answered Pa when he would ask in that stricken voice, but what did you do with all that money? She would look utterly trapped for a moment but then take a quiet if desperate stand on her faith in her sanity. She would say, I don't know just this moment where it went, but I know I didn't waste any of it. I'm afraid I can't make that kind of proud boast. I have wasted. I can't say I wasn't warned. I have known the true nature of time since I was four years old. Maybe three. So I do not now come awake to a sense of time gone with any wobbly feeling that I dreamed it all away or piddled it or flubbed it. I could have done better, yes, but then who couldn't? Human action is almost always fatefully inefficient, the input of time and effort greater than the takeout of achievement and experience. Mine especially.

Right now I feel myself being detained by something other than the seemliness of this haunting scene. I feel a voice in me speaking unhappily at the prospect of keeping my appointment with the man I am supposed to meet, an old acquaintance I haven't seen in many years. I feel mild distress at the prospect of breaking the ice and reviv-

PETER BERLINRUT, here making his first appearance in COMMENTARY, is a writer and sculptor who lives in Roosevelt, New Jersey.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing a friendship never too intense at best and certainly not at its best now, after all these years. The question in my mind, therefore, is: is this voice I hear the voice of my true norm or is it the voice of passing convenience? I do not want to mistake the one for the other as I so often have in the past, and would not like to again. I never doubt there is a true norm within me worthy of trust as oracle and lawgiver for my life. My quandary is the babble of lesser voices trying to mask themselves in its guise, its authority, its timbre. That's where the pinch is. And to complicate things even more, there is the changeability of everything, including the norm by which we strive to control changeability. Is it true for me to say, all things change, including norms? I'm not sure about that. Does it help me to say, go by what you feel now, when the question is precisely: what do I feel now?

So, going back to that deposition which is my existential self-summary, viz., I have lived, I remember, I am constant: in what is my constancy? By what evidence can I claim it? That I answer to the same name I did years and years ago? That isn't enough. My norm, even in its inmost, could be changing under the very nose of my conscious mind but if, for some reason or other, I chose not to notice it and to go on proclaiming an inner constancy, everything in me would seem to support it. We persuade ourselves. I know a man who has persuaded himself quite completely that he had no Stalinist sympathies during the 30's. The evidence to the contrary is piled sky-high right outside his window but he never sees it, not any more. So if I persuade myself of a certain constancy, if I claim a certain positive sameness in and amid all the change since I first became aware, at least I can say I have made some allowance for the innocent duplicity that lurks in the path of such belief.

TIME IS the culprit.. It separates my thought of today from my thought of six months, a decade, two-score years ago. Time, the culprit, time, time. It goes and it goes and it goes, it will never stop until the last drop of change has been squeezed out of the phenomenal universe. Some day if we could travel faster than light and get to some condensing destination before the rays bringing the sights and sounds of an event we have witnessed, we could witness it again. Maybe. Or, that being a bit difficult, if we could station ourselves at the right spot in the curved universe we might intercept such rays in their circular journey. We would then see it all again and, at least by that much, set time on its heels. Events themselves being irreversible in my opinion, we couldn't live it again, but we could see it again and hear it. And that might be nice. It might help my sense of constancy, my feeling that I have always been, and now am, I, if I could catch a glimpse of myself sitting here forty-six years ago, a thoughtful college freshman glad to be resting and alone and quiet after that tug-of-war with the sophomores.

MY EYE comes to rest on the spot occupied by a red brick building on the south side of the Square, long demolished to make room for the buildings of the expanding university. In its heyday it was a fancy one-family dwelling, but by the time Paul found a small apartment there it was long past its glory and cut up into two shrunken units on each floor. I am thinking of Paul now. That loose mist in the mind that forms itself into images from instant to instant, some on conscious demand and some involuntarily, keeps becoming the uncomforted face of Paul. I am looking at the spot where the building stood with the innocent hope that something left over from the past hovers in the air there, perhaps some ectoplasmic smoke still lingering from the modest fires of our talks, the vigils we kept while the Sixth Avenue elevated rumbled by intermittently. There is nothing, not a trace that anything but what is there now was there ever.

I met Paul one late afternoon in the office of a mutual friend and I found him a rather good listener, very nicely underopinionated. It suited me well, and I dropped in on him from time to time when I was in the Village. He was then beginning a medical interneship in Bellevue or some other local hospital and he was trying to do right by it in the face of odds. He was trying to do right by his mother who lived in Long Island and who had half-pushed and half-cajoled him into medicine. She was a power worshiper, she believed everyone had to power his way through obstacles, and she had strongly influenced him. He could joke about the old war-horse, he could be sophisticated about silver-cord mothers, but when it came to bedrock, she was his mother, she had made important sacrifices for him, he owed her something. He was trying also to do right by the young woman with whom he was sharing the apartment and whom he had met at the hospital. She was from somewhere in the Midwest, had striking black eyes and jet black hair, seemed tied up in strange knots with gestures and mannerisms intimating that what she had to say was beyond words.

I remember hesitantly coming to the conclusion that Paul was overmatched, that he wasn't quite up to all he had taken on. Everything he did was a holding action to stave off a sense of nothingness always waiting to creep up from wherever it bided. At that he felt scorn for nihilists, cynics, professional snivelers, the assorted grotesques around the Village. He had reservations about literature, art, writers. One night we were sitting across from each other in his small living room and he said, I wouldn't mind being a failure as a writer or an artist if I felt it did something for me but it wouldn't; if you suffer from the feeling of nothingness as I do, why prop it up with books or art? He seemed to feel that the sense of nothing-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ness was a natural liability like a weak stomach, a speech stammer, or a defect in manual coordination, something to grow out of. It was nothing to exploit or put on display. Perhaps it was a matter of going out and creating a little miracle for oneself as he did one day when, in utter surfeit and rebellion against the hospital, he called in sick and took a neighbor's child on a day-long visit through the Museum of Natural History. He glowed when he talked about it for weeks and weeks afterward. I recall his saying, for me the agedness of the universe and the enormity is worth far more than any man-made art and the beautiful thing is that it doesn't strain to entertain me.

But these little miracles didn't come too often, and most of the time Paul carried out a holding action. I remember sitting in that living room wondering if the furniture would be there the next time I came, if Paul and Dorothy would still be together, even if he would be alive, there was that feeling of impermanence in the air. I could see why a sensitive man like Paul would be enthralled by all the agedness he had seen in the Museum, considering that nothing in his or Dorothy's life in the Village went back farther than yesterday, or maybe a week, and no future more than a day or two ahead was ever thought about. He was like a man with too many creditors and badly inadequate funds so that all he could do was to make a meager daily remittance, just enough to keep them quiet. It was, finally, a matter of just getting through the waking hours until it was time to sleep. Something would come along, something or someone would give him a cue, a reason, a meaning to live.

It came. He had never felt it a matter for argument that the Communists distorted, exaggerated, and falsified whenever they felt it served their purpose. It was so and he accepted it as so. But one night we were seated in the Willow Cafeteria and there was a new look in his eye when he said, it's no use, man cannot be man in this system, I cannot think of any affirmation that I or anybody else can make about this society, but the Communists *can* make an affirmation that sticks. I said, do you believe that affirmation? He said, probably not, and that may be my trouble. He looked away in thought and his uncomforted face never looked more without comfort. He said, you know, I wonder if we're not like the Romans of the 2nd or 3rd century who encountered the Christian gospel and could hear it only as an irrational cry of the helots? Are we missing a great cue of history out of complacence? I don't recall exactly what I said but I couldn't agree. Paul became more and more convinced in the weeks that followed that we were living in a millennial era, a time of great changes. Having taken a wavering first step, a second step was a little easier. He came out with stories of people in the hospital, people in the Village, who had declared their sympathy for Communism, and there was no denying the change he could see in them, the new sense of meaning, aim, purpose. He envied them, but he still hung back about seeing it as something for himself. He felt he had been too deeply marred by the canker of individuation, of personal autonomy, to be able to surrender to party discipline and control.

That stage lasted about a year. He vacillated. Yes, the Communists were fanatical apostles of redemption. No, they were sectarian bigots. Yes, the class struggle was gospel. No, the class struggle was twaddle. Yes, Stalin was aborting a great revolution. Yes and no, no and yes, yes and no. Paul was a man whose face at best looked strained but in those days he looked downright feverish. Word got around that he was a medical-school graduate, an interne, and party members or sympathizers came to the apartment in quest of help for their ailments. Arguments often got under way and the walls shook with noise.

Impulsively my eyes again turn to the spot where the building stood and I go on some foolish way expecting that some palpable trace hovers over it; there is of course nothing. The imposing facade of the university buildings that stand on the south side of the Square couldn't be more exclusive and dominating in their hold on the present moment and their monopoly even seems retroactive. Those few times late at night when I tottered out of Paul's building, my head spinning with all the talk, my nerves abuzz, my conscience quivering in a cross-grain distemper, have left no mark. And the park remains the park.

I CAME ACROSS Paul one day on Fourth Street, we talked a few moments and his face became tight, defiant, portentous. He announced that he had become a member of the Communist party. It caught me by surprise, but otherwise had little effect. To all intents and purposes he had been one in my mind for quite a while, though I hadn't supposed he was ready to part with all the independence and personal freedom to be a card-carrying member. I told him I hoped he would find whatever it was he was seeking. He said he was already sure of that, and then with a forced and mirthless smile, he added that it was only a question of time before I would be in the party. There was only one way for an intelligent man to go and that was into the party and he was certain I was an intelligent man. I answered that while no one could guarantee what he would do in the future, the odds against my becoming a member or sympathizer were overwhelming. Nothing had changed between us, it was an agreeable conversation. We were not one iota less friends after that conversation on Fourth Street than before.

One night a few weeks later I found myself in Paul's place. At the crest of the evening about seven or eight people were there, among them a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Welsh seaman who had come to consult Paul about a cough or some other item of health. Dorothy had left him by then, ill-suited to the endless talk of politics and the people who came to see Paul only to get free medical advice. Instead of Dorothy, there was a dark-haired woman who was in the process of moving in. By ten-thirty or so, only four of us were left, Paul, the new woman, the Welsh seaman, and I. The seaman had more or less claimed the floor all evening and poured out endless vituperation against the capitalist system and the bourgeoisie. There was no evil that the bourgeoisie wouldn't practice or tolerate if it served its material interests, whereas in Russia as soon as they found out a man was an anti-social son-of-a-bitch, they put him against a wall and shot him. Now, thirty-odd years later, sitting here and remembering it, I can still see his face boiling red, his eyes aglitter, his nostrils dilated as he wallowed in near-voluptuous pleasure at the anti-social sons-of-bitches in Russia being gunned down in juicy numbers. He cursed and he frothed and he couldn't pour out enough anathema. I early suspected part of it was by way of paying Paul for the medical advice, of letting Paul know that he, the seaman, was a truly zealous and deserving Communist. But even after discarding a fair portion of his tirade as rhetoric for the occasion, there was enough true vindictiveness left over to counterburn the sun. I sat there telling myself I would not get involved, I would let this manic have his fling unchallenged and unreproved.

It should have embarrassed Paul, the host, who was fair-minded, civilized, reasonable. It didn't. He sat there with a smile which seemed mostly approving. I marveled at that a little. Then the seaman launched into the idea that the capitalist system maintained an annual quota of unemployed workers in order to have strikebreakers when needed, to keep those still working in line, and to keep wages down. I had vowed not to get involved, but at this point I couldn't hold myself in. I said, do you mean that the capitalists deliberately arrange for the number of unemployed? Where do you get evidence for that? Evidence, he bellowed loud enough to be heard in Canarsie, what evidence do you want? Can't you see millions of people out on the streets starving all over the world wherever this stinking system rules? What evidence do you want, an affidavit from the Pope with two witnesses? I turned to Paul who had been sitting there with that strange smile and said, Paul, do you believe that? The expression that came over his face, a certain kind of gross and coarse hostility, disquieted me. He said, yes, I do, and to hell with semantic niceties. I am talking true or false, I said, I am saying that if there actually were a conspiracy of capitalists to produce a certain number of unemployed workers, it would involve too many people and one way or another word would get out. The hell it would, bellowed the seaman—they control the press, don't they, and everything else and they know how to cover their tracks, don't be naive. He then launched into a tirade on the evils of hair-splitting. It was veiled just enough not to be a personal attack, but it was plain to see whom he had in mind.

It bothered me but I kept my mouth shut. What bothered me worse, though in a quieter way, was Paul's manner. The seaman owed me nothing and I expected nothing from him. But for Paul to sit there while this vulgar and mindless agitator trampled over truth, moderation, sensibility, left me with a feeling of the floor giving way under me. More than merely being quiet, Paul seemed strangely fascinated and approving. This wasn't Hyde Park or Union Square or a Berlin café, it was Paul's living room, and the time when Paul should have intervened to get this man closer to line was already long past. But worse was to come. From his opening attack on hair-splitters, the seaman went on to an attack on petit-bourgeois intellectuals which became less and less veiled. He had been feeling his way, and when it had grown clear to him that Paul had no intention of befriending me, he really let himself go, over the entire spectrum of Communist abuse. He didn't look at me, didn't mention me, as he went through the repertoire: bourgeois lackeys and ass-kissers, mental masturbators, pen prostitutes, etc., etc., etc.

I SAT THERE not knowing where to hurt the most. It is most painful to recall this now as I sit looking at the spot where it all happened thirty-odd years ago, and I most earnestly wish it were not in my past. I kept looking at Paul as this obnoxious *lumpenmensch* went on with his performance; the least Paul could have done was to change the subject or clear his throat or offer more coffee, but he did nothing. For my part I should have gotten up and gone, which is what I would do now in a similar situation. I couldn't then, I sat and suffered. The dark-haired young woman was, as near as I could see and understand then, rather enthralled and in sympathy with the seaman. More and more the realization grew in me that the reason Paul didn't stop or check the seaman's offensive rant was that it seemed true to him, that it represented the kind of strong words and strong sentiments that he hadn't dared to use or even to affirm within himself, but now that someone else was saying them, he felt it was right that they should be said. That sickened me. It was a revelation about Paul. I had the feeling that he had developed a whole syndrome of the most vulgar and coarse reservations about the world in general and me and my life in particular but had lacked whatever it took to come out and say so. Perhaps at the outset he had drawn back a shade at the temerity of such notions, but now, as I watched the little smile on his face, I could see

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he liked it. He approved and he relished. It made him contemptible. All that earlier period when he had been groping his way toward Communism, I kept hearing from Paul what a better man he felt he was because of his new bond with ordinary people and how much a certain value long submerged was breaking the surface in his life. That kept flitting through my mind as I sat there, my face red, burning to death with discomfiture. Suddenly I saw Paul as weak and despicable and I knew that my original intuition about him—that he was a man spiritually overmatched—was more awfully true than I suspected.

I was goaded beyond my yielding point, I was in rout, I was hurting in all directions, and I took the one outlet that was closest to hand: the seaman. I let him have it. Oh, even at this remove it is painful to recall, and I am ashamed that I gave it back to him in the kind of language he had no trouble understanding. He lunged for me, I half rose to avoid him, and he aimed a knee to the groin. He fought like he lived and he thought: strictly deckhand. I managed to pin his arms to his sides and held him in a bear hug so that he could do me no harm. He wriggled but he couldn't break the hold. Paul didn't make a move or say a word. While this all happened quite quickly, there was still enough time for Paul to see and to react and to do something. He didn't. He just sat there. It was unbelievable to me. I had this struggling man in my arms, I didn't want him to hit me, I didn't want to hit him. The adventure was over, the evening was over, many things were over that moment, and I wanted only to be out of that apartment, even if with no more than bare life and limb, leaving behind certain things of value that were then my sole possessions. I looked over my shoulder at Paul and shouted, take him away. Few people that I have taken into my life as peers and intimates ever appeared as ugly and evil and regressed to animalism as Paul did at that moment. I couldn't understand. What was in his mind, what did he want? A brawl, blood, to see me humiliated even worse? Finally I pushed the seaman away from me and sent him sprawling across the room, not such a feat considering I outweighed him by at least thirty pounds. By that time Paul or the woman went over to him to quiet him down. My hands somehow found my hat and coat and I was out of the apartment.

THE PARK that I am looking at was the park I saw as I came out of the aromatic vestibule of that house. It rests now under the sunlight of a lovely spring day. That night it was a dark unrecognizable blur. Much as I like indoor life, usually the moment of passing from indoors to outdoors is a moment of release, relief, and freedom. Not that night. I couldn't see or feel a single thing clearly or distinctly. If the injury was only to my dignity, then it is a mistake to underestimate the role of dignity. It would have been easier, perhaps, to bear with a bloody nose, a loose tooth, or a black eye. Why hadn't I kept quiet? It wasn't the first time I had encountered Stalinist blather, it wouldn't have been the first evening in my life to go down the drain in incompatible company. The hazards were familiar, but the trouble was that I met up with them in totally unexpected circumstances. Paul was a likable and civilized man, and I never expected to run into a gauche, agit-prop harangue in his apartment, nor to be subjected to personal abuse and insult, at least not without some reproof or objection from Paul. I can see him now as I saw him then, with that strange little smile that couldn't have been more reprehensible. He seemed to take pleasure in the strong things said, especially when they were directed at me. They were demolishing blows at my status as a questing man, blows that his own nature perhaps precluded from delivering, so that it seemed to fascinate him to hear someone else do it.

I never set foot in his apartment after that night. Our friendship was over and we both knew it. I'm sorry about what happened, said Paul later when I ran into him somewhere in the Village, but his statement of regret had no warmth or sincerity, it was a bow to the amenities. I answered, so am I, and that was it. I cannot be certain that at this moment I understand him better than I did then. I remember I rather absolved him with passing days because I surmised it was more in the times than in Paul. Everybody was tooling up for the use of any harshness or vileness necessary to settle the human account. The Communists were saying, comrades, we must not wince or flinch in our day of reckoning with the bourgeoisie, whether on the political, economic, or cultural front. The Nazi said, when someone mentions culture I reach for my revolver. The virilists were saying, the answer is in good liquor, nubile women, courageous bulls, and safaris to hunt tigers. There was no human dog so flea-ridden, so wormy and bemiseried but felt free to lift a leg on fair humanity or gentle life.

A misunderstood Nietzsche owned every street corner and Lenin, informed once that one of his followers was criminal lowlife said grimly, the revolution can use him too. So who was Paul to stand up to all that, and if a friendship had to be sacrificed in the class struggle, so what? Revolutions weren't nice but necessary, and when blows began to fall, who could stop to worry if each one fell on the enemy? And, finally, if there were some things he was a little too squeamish to do or say himself, he was all the more impressed and indebted to anyone who could do or say them for him.

I ran into Paul a few times after that unhappy evening but we never said anything more than hello to each other. I heard rumors. He set up an office to practice medicine, he became a trusted

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

friend of the *apparat,* a zealous defender of the faith, with sensitive nostrils to smell out deviations and heresy, whether white chauvinism or black nationalism or Trotskyism or collaborationism or Lovestoneism or what not. The days of the nothingness of life were far, far by. As Joyce said of Poldy, he had traveled. Paul's journey came to an end shortly before the end of the Second World War when he fell ill of stomach cancer and died in a few months.

His face keeps bobbing in and out of my awareness as I sit here looking at the spot where he spent several important years, and something in me calls for an epitaph but I cannot find one that would be satisfactory to both of us. If I were to say he was an honest man who meant well, his ghost would rise to flay me alive. He felt burning scorn for honest men who meant well. He once argued warmly that Norman Thomas, an honest man who meant well, was helping the fascists to power. It was Communism or fascism, and those who weren't lined up with Communism were helping fascism, whatever their honesty or good intentions. What, then, is there to say?

SHALL I avail myself of what Ilse said of him once? Ilse, a poetess. I remember her, she lived two houses away, they met through me but never became friendly. I met Ilse herself during those three or four months I spent in a literary agency which was bogus. I knew it was bogus the first week I landed there but I was young, my mind was elsewhere, I had an easy cynicism that this bogus was insignificantly tiny inside the huge bogus in which everybody was trapped. I was opposed to cavilling at a gnat in the process of swallowing a camel. Still, three months was all I could stand there. Ilse was a fellow employee. She spoke in a manner half-deferential, half-supercilious, and always quiet. And unexpectedly she would come to an early pause, look at her listener searchingly with a question: do I need to say any more? do we really need to waste time and words on this trifle? She was groomed and dressed for a role and there was no mistaking it: her hair was a rich brown, her shirtwaists were just so, her skirts tailored, any ornaments carefully picked, everything to proclaim: taste. One day we were talking of something or other when Paul's name came up. She said softly, he's such a typical fellow-traveler and I find him quite wearisome. Then came that look: do I need to say more? I did not like her remark and I said, Ilse, life is wearisome and death is wearisome, and the painful in-between is also wearisome, but I'm a sworn meliorist and I find nothing helped or solved or even understood in calling it wearisome. Again that look, and then she said with smiling amiability, do you really think so?—and she walked away.

Ilse wrote poetry of almost intolerable distinction. There was never a word or a phrase in it that wasn't filtered through a mesh of elegance and fastidiousness, almost too much; but her spoken vocabulary was quite another matter. Without using them profligately, there wasn't one four-letter word she denied herself when she felt it was in order. It came to me gradually that she was in mortal opposition to genteelness, conceiving it as an arch enemy of true elegance, to be riddled and annihilated every time she came across it.

We had lunch a number of times in an inexpensive little upstairs Italian restaurant and I remember her toying with a hard breadstick, distant and abstracted, delivering herself scorchingly on a number of matters. If there's anything I can't stand, she said with her supercilious smile, it's poetry without balls. I said, you subscribe to the testicle standard of literary values. She said, please don't pettifog and don't be the professor, you know what I mean. I said, I truly do not know what you mean, what is the gonadal standard of value? She said, you're a nice boy and it's time you were told of life. I said, thank you, tell me. Ilse said, poetry, and all art for that matter, is a form of symbolic warmth and its success or effectiveness depends on whether it is born of true warmth or not, and the source of true warmth is the gonads, as you put it. I said, but your poetry doesn't say balls, your poetry is full of exotic and unknown words and of difficult, recondite concepts. I would say they couldn't be further away from balls. Ilse said, you're making a common mistake, you're thinking of roots and blossoms as being the same thing and of course they're not, ovaries and balls are the roots but poetry is the blossom and the blossom doesn't duplicate or emblemize the roots. The blossoms have their own laws, their own beauty and grandeur, do you find anything vulgar or pornographic in my poetry? I said truthfully, no I do not. Ilse said, with a certain disdain, of course not, I loathe and am embarrassed by naively erotic poetry, it's aborted nature in which the roots are naively made to pass as blossoms.

Ilse intimated that if American letters were honest she would be a first lady, not a near unknown doing the work of a clerk. For her the literary agency was a stopover. Sooner or later there would be some recognition, a prize, a Guggenheim, a chair of English in a good college. She was still under thirty and there was time. She had been married and separated, and she now had a lover of whom she was disinclined to say much. It wasn't that she set any value on privacy, it was merely that there was no way of telling about him that could bring out their tie. She told very little about the man she loved.

Where did I get the sense that in a quiet and overceremonialized way she was waging a most redoubtable campaign for recognition, advancement, preferment? I am not sure: a word here and there, a gesture, an expression. She came in one morning carefully bearing a cut-glass vase of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wildflowers. She removed one of the flowers, delicately laid it on my desk and said, did you know today is Emily Dickinson's birthday? I said, no, I didn't. She said, yes, it is, I think we should observe it, I'm very fond of her, are you? I answered, I very much like her but I'm not a member of the cult. Ilse said, I know someone who is thinking of bringing out a new edition of the poems and I may get the chance to write an introduction, oh! I would love that, there are so many things about her I would like to say. Half an hour later, sitting at the desk and looking at the flower, I happened to fall into quite a mood of nostalgia about the 19th century, about Emily, about elm-lined New England towns, about any time and place that was far away from that morning at work. Then it occurred to me that the conversation of a few minutes ago was far more about the opportunity that Ilse might get to write an introduction than it was about Emily Dickinson. It was that way again and again. Once she left a literary quarterly on the desk. I read it. She had a poem in it and I praised it the next time I saw her. Ilse said, if you like it, why don't you write a few words to Blank Blank and say so? I had the feeling that the thing had been staged for just that purpose.

Ilse, in a quiet way, was pressing hard for success and abstractly it didn't bother me. By that time I had met scores of people doing the same thing and using means far less pretty. What bothered me, as I recall it now, was that a number of times when our conversation reached a point where further patient exploration was necessary, Ilse would break off. It wasn't that she didn't have the mind. She had mind enough for anything. It was something else. I sensed she was asking: when this conversation is over, how much more recognized or famous as a poet and writer will I be? how much financially richer? what opportunity I do not have now will be mine? Since the answer was always in the negative, Ilse would break off or change the subject, playfully or brusquely or even cruelly. But always with elegance and fastidiousness. There was even a faint touch of: you males are often the most engaging and delightful refugees from a spiritual kindergarten where ideas are absorbing playthings, but do you mind if we crass women keep an eye on the kitchen stove, on such coarse and vulgar things as success, money, good clothes, a nice apartment, and winters on the Mediterranean?

ILSE SENSED how I felt. She also knew that I knew how she felt. It stopped there. I soon gave over trying to understand her beyond a point. What was the use? One time I walked into her apartment while she was writing. She lived on the south side of the Square, two houses away from Paul whom I had set out to see that evening and who wasn't home. I was badly in need of company. I walked upstairs to the floor she lived on, her apartment door was open, I entered. There was no one in the small living room but I saw a light behind a wooden partition and then the shadow of her chair and her figure through the narrow door opening. I poked my head inside and said, hello. There was a pen in her hand, her head was tilted up, her eyes were closed, and she seemed inside a spell or trance. I stood there for five seconds or more, not knowing if she was aware that I was there, not knowing whether to stay or to go. Her eyes opened gradually and it was the only move she made. Then she said with her eyes: you go on being here but let me be as I am. Nothing more. I went into the living room, sat down, and spent a restless twenty-five minutes reading a magazine, then I decided to leave and I walked out. I felt a little like a clumsy boy intruding on a grown-up's business.

I never felt any need to refer to the episode but I vaguely remember she graciously explained things to my complete satisfaction. If she hadn't, I wouldn't have felt it a loss or mystery. Not by then. By then I could postulate that she had developed a certain kind of fearlessness out of having lived in fear, a perverse ethereality out of an idea that all vitality centered around the gonads, and even the very hyper-alertness of her mind out of a bent for revery. Yet I could still be disagreeably affected by her itch for success, for knowing important people. I remember my wanton imagination would cut loose shockingly and I would think of her on all fours, crawling about panting with her tongue hanging out, oh! success! recognition! distinction! money! importance! Is it that there is a dark side to our face that we never see until it is reflected in another's?

And was there also a certain solipsism about her that rubbed me the wrong way, not nearly as much as the craving for success? Was she tipped by a hair's-breadth toward overassigning grandeur and mystery to her own experience and denying it in others? Occasionally I thought so then. I remember one time in her apartment just after I read her latest poems, saying to her, Ilse, you baffle me, you seem to have two vocabularies. In your conversation you cut the world down to size very thoroughly with fucks and balls and *dreck* and other pleasant pungencies, but in your poetry not only is there no trace of them, but I find words that I don't even know the meaning of; it's almost a matter of two different ways of looking at life, one for what the world is and another for your subjective experience.

She said, finally, all right, let me concede some truth to your point for the sake of our discussion, but then what is so remarkable about it? The world today touches us as an obscenity and is viciously set to prevent us from building an altar, and what divinity there is lies exclusively in personal experience. Now in my conversation, as you note, I give the world its proper meed, and why not?—*dreck* unto *dreck*—but in my personal experi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ence I find a great and terrible drama in what is celestial and what is clay, and that's what I try to express. Brecht says, *erst kommt das Fressen* and the world grovels at his feet for being such an unsparing realist, including your Communist friend Paul—people want to wash out the dirtiness of their spirtual linen in the waters of a struggle for social justice and it cannot be done, all it does is produce dirty justice.

I said, Ilse, aren't you misstating the problem a bit? She said, possibly I am, but then I'm not really interested in making the world secure for anything but poetry; you said a few minutes ago there were words in my poems that you didn't know, would you tell me what they were? I remember looking down at her long poem which I was still holding in my hand and saying, my vocabulary is a modest one, what about *nidulation, viduage, menisciform, pilose, stegnosis, renitent?* Ilse said, what about them? I said, I don't know what they mean. She said, you should be ashamed of yourself, you call yourself a literate man. I said, I am ashamed of myself and I shall no longer call myself a literate man. She said in a hurt tone, would you at least concede I might have felt urgent reason for using those words, not merely for impressing anybody? We argued that night, and I don't think we convinced each other of anything. I walked out of her apartment and downstairs holding the same idea of Ilse that I had held when I walked in. I felt that in the meeting of herself and the world, she was giving herself a little too much the best of it, possibly holding herself a bit too dearly and the world a bit too cheaply. Then too I probably had a gently disquieting feeling of having thrown good time after a rather bad cause. The world was going up in smoke around us and there was Ilse worrying that it wasn't erecting altars and beating the outer fringes of semantic exactitude with *illation* and *nidulation* and *myriarch* and *tirl.* I recall resting on a bench here quite a while afterward, letting her voice subside gradually and give over to this same norm, this same quiet.

SITTING HERE now I muse on how easily life can fade out even the important people in our lives. And Ilse wasn't that important. In a few months I tired of the bogus literary agency and I said to the owner, my life calls me elsewhere, friend, farewell. I no longer saw Ilse daily. In a few weeks or months I didn't see her at all. The fading process set in and took the color from her face, muted the resonance of her voice. Then the Second World War came and that really was an avalanche to bury forever the semblance of whoever or whatever had been a thread of coherence. One night I walked into a restaurant on Eighth Street and there sat Ilse, alone, near the window, evidently finishing her dinner. I didn't recognize her at first but I knew I knew her. It didn't feel like fifteen years, it felt more like a hundred and fifty years, like reincarnation verified beyond doubt. She held a cup of coffee arrested in midair and I was standing there holding my hat and coat like a robot. We came inevitably to the conclusion that this was fact, not phantasmagoria. Soon I was seated at her table and we were talking.

She was a vastly changed woman. That was my impression as soon as I saw her, and it deepened with every minute that passed. I sat there, the floor heaving under me and a nervous storm all through me. I was too engrossed to be aware of it, much less to understand it. Gradually things assumed a bit of clarity. It was Ilse all right. She had changed, I had changed, the time, the place, the earth itself, everything. But, there we were.

Ilse's lips as I remembered them had almost always been slightly open and apart and in a certain curlicue. It was an expression that seemed to leave her face ever prepared to break into a supercilious smile, a smile of amusement. I used to think if Gabriel, or whoever, popped out of the floor and announced the end of the world in five minutes, Ilse would have that supercilious smile on tap and murmur, could I perhaps have an extension of two minutes to finish this rahther int'rusting poeym? Her face had had certain prominences, certain bulging convexities that suggested indulgences of ego, her skin had had a creaminess right out of Colette and Renoir and Italian *morbidezza.* It was all gone. I thought at first it might be my angle of vision, it might be the changes in myself but, no, it was really gone. Her lips when they weren't open for words or sipping, were firmly closed and in a straight line, her face had grown thinner. Her manner was ardent in a certain way and straightforward and I don't remember that she uttered one critical or iconoclastic word about anything or anyone. She was no longer living in the Village, she was married to a man who was in business, she had an adopted daughter, they lived in Bronxville. She had come to the Village to have dinner and spend the evening with a friend, a last surviving friend, a woman who painted and who wrote. Something had gone wrong, the friend was not at home, and here she was.

No, she was no longer writing, at least not then. No. I asked, why not? She thought for a moment, then she said, I suppose I could say I wearied of rejection slips and no publication but I don't believe that explanation, at least not as the essential one, no, as closely as I could probe the truth, it has seemed to me that I could no longer feel that the writing of poetry was a sapient function.

I said to Ilse, what is a sapient function? how would you define it? Ilse said very quietly, I'm afraid I shall have to beg off, I can only say that to me poetry has always had a vatic role, a something we perceive on the edge of awareness, a whisper we hear, but today people feel that only a shout or a dramatic declaration does justice to the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

important things, that to me is the death of poetry and an end to its sapient function. I said, but don't you miss it, don't you miss the writing? She looked white-faced and strained beyond limits, she said, I tell myself I don't, I tell myself I plough the moment of heightened awareness back into a better grasp of life instead of making a poem of it.

No, this woman Ilse was not the woman I remembered from fifteen years ago. Yet of course she was. All that engrossed hour that I spent sitting at her table and talking was a tingling thing in which at every moment I was at work aligning Ilse as she was then with Ilse as she had been. It was exhausting. At times it was painful. My inner retina hurt from being a palimpsest on which the Ilse of that moment was crowding and clashing and rubbing in a quarrelsome way against the Ilse of that vanished time that lay so distantly on the other side of the war and God alone knew how many other quakes of history. Gone were the four-letter words, the obscenities by which she had felt she had to prevail over an obscene world, gone was the gonadal norm of value, gone was that posture of fastidiousness in which every ray of sunlight had to place itself elegantly and exquisitely across anything it touched in order to avoid her supercilious dismissal of it, gone was that overweening confidence that but for the stupidity and crassness of the cultural milieu she would be a greatly acclaimed and successful artist. All gone. But who was her successor, who was this woman, this Ilse? A woman vastly chastened by life? A woman whose genuine talents and insight had driven her into a corner out of which she had found her way with some myterious moral reserve? A woman who had not got what she wanted, and so had learned to want what she got? A woman who had learned simply that it was easier to get along with the world by talking pretty instead of talking harsh?

Then it was time to go. I reached for my coat and hat and stood up. Her head was lowered and her eyes were down, and it was deliberate and it was gentle and it was a tremendous reproof. Not a word, not a murmur, not a flicker of an eyebrow, just lowered eyes and I felt mocked, as if I were in the presence of the earlier Ilse who was saying: must little boys pick up their little playthings and run off to their little games for their little easy moments of fellowship? I stood there flattened out, all the more so because the Ilse of that moment would not mock anybody. Finally she looked up, reached for her handbag, pulled out a card and handed it to me. She said, won't you please take my address, won't you please come and visit me? There were two or three seconds of silence as we looked at each other, and I said, I will come to see you, Ilse, as soon as I am a little steadier on my feet. She still had her eyes on me, charging me to remember what I once said I stood for, and spoke as within a spell and said, please come to see me, I speak from the heart. I said, yes, Ilse, and walked away.

I THINK it was an autumn night and the air felt cool as I stepped into the outdoors of Eighth Street. The air would have felt cool if it had been a sweltering summer night, that moment of being popped from the engorged confinement of that restaurant into the open space. I did not notice anything of what was going on around me, the Saturday night people seeking excitement and entertainment, the people at store windows, the automobiles, the whatever. I floated along in a mood, turned right on Fifth Avenue, made my obeisances to the familiar buildings and headed for this park, the old park which has been a symbol of the place to leave and the place to come home to for a rest, for meditation, for the achievement of clarity about the places I have been. Whatever mood I had, Ilse's words kept breaking in from time to time in some rhythmic periodicity I wasn't quite up to understanding: I speak from the heart, I speak from the heart. I picked a bench not too far from this one and sat down. There was still a substantial part of the evening left, I could claim it for whatever I wanted, and what I wanted then was to discharge from my being the force of the experience of the past hour and a half. Part of it had already slipped away in far time now that I was here in the old park, my immemorial home grounds. But the remainder burned scorchingly. I was in disgrace enough when I had stepped into that restaurant but now I was in disgrace on top of disgrace. The trees, the buildings, the people had taken up Ilse's words and made them a chant: I speak from the heart. I hadn't understood them when they were uttered, I didn't understand them then. I looked around me searching for the ancient oracle, I remember saying, well, friend park, what have you to say to me now? The park didn't have anything to say to me. There are times when a tree seems neutral, night-time unconcerned, and human faces diffident beyond all bearing. It was that way then. Twenty minutes passed before I felt strength returning, strength being that function that hoists the permanent over the passing. I felt its timeless voice in me: I have lived, I remember, I am constant.

What had Ilse meant by her words, I speak from the heart? Was it one of those ceremonial or sentimental phrases tacked on by people to sweeten the manner of what is otherwise a neutral if not harsh fact? Possibly, but not likely. Not Ilse, not as I knew her. Even if she wasn't writing now, Ilse was a poet *à l'outrance*, a poet who would writhe in mortification and die before she would let herself fall into loose speech. Nor could it be an emphasis of mere urgency, Ilse was too much of a realist for that. She would never believe that the mere urgency of anybody's wish or need, her own included, made it just or right. What then

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

could it possibly mean for Ilse to say, I speak from the heart? Was it perhaps one of those winged things to be understood on the fly or not at all, fated for a cloudy death when stretched out on a table for analysis? I couldn't accept that. There I sat, a man with an idea badly missing—or was it simply a state of repose that was missing? I didn't know but I was sure I didn't want the repose back unless it came bringing the missing idea with it.

When a satisfactory explanation began to dawn on me, I rejected it at first, but the explanation kept coming back, not to be waved off, and so it came to me that what Ilse meant in saying that her invitation came from the heart was that it was cast in absolute mutuality. She was saying, whatever reason you might have for not wanting to accept this invitation has been recognized in advance and provided for. She was saying, whatever other eye your own eye feels it would like to have the service of in seeing what it wants to see, I will be that eye and whatever mind your mind would like the help of in pondering the idea you wish to ponder, I will be that mind.

I arose from the bench and just wandered along the paved walks for another half hour or so. I had no quarrel with any of the contorted faces I might have passed, none with the unsightly buildings around the Square, none with anybody or anything. The autumn night was in bonus form and quite beautiful and standing up well against the city guff. I was stirred with the sense I felt I had found in Ilse's words and in a heady mood to go on conjugating the possibilities of a discourse from the heart.

I'm not sure I know the reason I never did pay Ilse a visit. It wasn't that I suspected even a touch of rhetoric in her words. That wouldn't have stopped me even if I had. I can only stammer that the designs to which my imagination has been summoned at different times in my life have lain at too much distance from where my hand was working an actual shuttle. It happens that way. It is only now that a dismay in full strength settles on me and I ponder the meaning of another cue I missed. But it is all water over a dam that time has set in painless distance.

TIME, THAT quiet tireless alchemist working under and over and all around my life, the weaver of inexorable revelations. Sitting here this nice peaceful afternoon and sopping up the free minutes I have before I go to keep an appointment, I tell myself, why bother with time or with memory or anything that interferes with the total immediacy of that young woman over there walking with her young sons idly? Or that figure on a bicycle near the Arch. Or the tree over there, the bench, the people as they are this instant, the buildings. They are now. I am now, I never was before, and I never will be after. The only good thing to be with regard to time is oblivious of it. That is why it is good to compress all that extended duration that lies back of me into its most distilled essence: I have lived, I remember, I am constant. That says it for me. And yet, and yet, and yet, am I really done with the subject of time? Is he not an inexorable creditor who steals in by the back door immediately after being ushered out by the front door clamoring for his due? Take that man on the bicycle near the Arch over there, could I so quickly recognize him for a man over forty if my mind weren't steeped in time and therefore able to discern the signs of time? The way he pushes the pedals, the way he leans forward, the set of his torso, the grip on the handlebars, it all tells a story of time understandable more readily to one who has been in time. Yes, time talks to time. Again and again I am thrown back on the amount of time my awareness has been stalking the world in order to squeeze out whatever intelligence I can. Occasionally they try to entice me with how nice it would be to view the Arch over there as something entirely in the present moment, forget the past, ignore the future. I answer, no, thank you. I tell them, I see all you see in the present moment but I see a little more for having seen it forty-six years ago and remembering it.

And my awareness of Ilse and Paul and that seaman and the others who were in their moment, what of that? What remains of it? Anything? Nothing? All that remains is a tremored sense of sped intervals, no memories, no ghosts, no relics. I who am now, also once was. Only a sense of intervals, hanging in the air around me like fine ash ever so faintly and fragrantly scented, left of a great tree created for burning and fated to go on burning as long as I am here to witness and to participate. It is that way.

And what then goes and what stays? What is? That was what I was asking when I sat down here, wasn't it? Could I make short work of the question simply by declaring, some things go, some things stay, my life is a changed same since it began, everything is fixed in flux and all flux is with a fixity? No. No, that doesn't satisfy me. I set out for a firm definition and that is what I will give myself. What then is constancy and how am I constant? I think constancy is a state of possessing and exercising a norm of being again and again and again. A norm of being that is so utterly satisfying, so prominent, and so recurrent that it becomes referent, prophet, beacon, judge. Having been so once, to be again and again. Just as the poet says, so was it when my life began, so is it now I am a man.

It is growing late. My old friend will soon be expecting me. Just now a boy sat down on the other half of this bench and is listening to a rhythmic rock tune from his transistor radio, and I am gently astonished to find my foot inside my shoe moving with the rhythm.

I am up off the bench now and walking toward my old friend's apartment on Waverly Place. It

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

feels good to be in motion now after the interval of rest. I can only conjecture on what turn of taste keeps him in the Village after all these years, but I concede he has been able to go on undiminished and achieve sufficient renewal to be himself. I think I can predict what his apartment will look like, what books will be on his shelves, what pictures on the walls, how the light will enter the windows and the view it will give of the street or the backyard. Yet whatever I find there I am confident I have an adequate repertoire of anticipations and it will only be a matter of bringing up the right one. And if it makes me happy to see him as I hope it will, then best of all I will shed all sense of reality as anticipated or not, because happiness is one state that needs no support to make it sit better.

Yes, it is a state in which I pass unchallenged, in which I do not need to show my card of identity, not even though I have it easily available and in most compact and distilled essence. It is a state within which the things of my furthest and most recessed past are brought up instantaneously into the here and now, like stragglers far from the fold brought home by a miraculous beacon. Then am I inclined to view the passage of time as a thing benign or harmless or neutral? No, absolutely not. Certainly not where it stands for a dimming or extinction of life, not where it brings outcomes all against my wishes. Only where it means intervals setting changes off from each other, only because there I have no choice, only because I can't imagine things existing outside of time. Then what about my own sense of constancy, my sense of the timeless and the same? Ah, that pertains only to me and is an element only in my experience. Whom else or what else am I, in any final sense, authorized to speak for?

COMMENTARY REPORTS

165 E. 56 ST; NEW YORK. N. Y. 10022

As a service to its readers Commentary makes available reprints of a number of its articles.

THE CITY

- ☐ THE FAILURE OF URBAN RENEWAL: A Critique and Some Proposals by Herbert J. Gans
- ☐ P. S. 165 by Richard Schickel
- ☐ UP FROM APATHY — THE WOODLAWN EXPERIMENT by Charles E. Silberman
- ☐ POVERTY PROBLEMS by Daniel P. Moynihan
- ☐ THE NEW YORK SCHOOL CRISIS by Maurice J. Goldbloom
- ☐ THE BETRAYAL OF THE AMERICAN CITY by David Danzig & John Feild

WORLD AFFAIRS

- ☐ THE FUTURE OF CAPITALISM by Robert L. Heilbroner
- ☐ SOCIALISM AND THE FUTURE by Robert L. Heilbroner
- ☐ THE LEGACY OF CHE GUEVARA by Norman Gall
- ☐ "BONN IS NOT WEIMAR": Reflections on the Radical Right in Germany by Walter Laqueur
- ☐ COMMUNISM IN ASIA by Donald S. Zagoria
- ☐ THE ARAB REFUGEES: A Zionist View by Marie Syrkin
- ☐ THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE by Marjorie Housepian
- ☐ LATIN AMERICA: THE CHURCH MILITANT by Norman Gall

AMERICAN POLITICS

- ☐ THE SHAPE OF AMERICAN POLITICS by Richard N. Goodwin
- ☐ IS ELECTORAL REFORM THE ANSWER? by Alexander M. Bickel
- ☐ THE DEMOCRATS AFTER 1968 by Penn Kemble
- ☐ COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY AMERICA by Robert L. Heilbroner
- ☐ THE FAILURE OF THE WARREN REPORT by Alexander M. Bickel
- ☐ THE PROBLEM OF THE NEW LEFT by Tom Kahn
- ☐ THE NEW LEFT AND ITS LIMITS by Nathan Glazer
- ☐ CONSERVATISM AFTER GOLDWATER by David Danzig

CIVIL RIGHTS

- ☐ "BLACK POWER" AND COALITION POLITICS by Bayard Rustin
- ☐ THE PRESIDENT & THE NEGRO: THE MOMENT LOST by Daniel P. Moynihan
- ☐ IN DEFENSE OF "BLACK POWER" by David Danzig
- ☐ THE WATTS "MANIFESTO" & THE McCONE REPORT by Bayard Rustin
- ☐ MUTUAL AID AND THE NEGRO by John Slawson
- ☐ THE MEANING OF NEGRO STRATEGY by David Danzig

PRICES: fifty cents each
Twenty-five or more: — 20% discount
The quantity price applies whether the same or assorted reports are shipped to the same address.

Minimum order: $3.00

POSTAGE is prepaid on orders shipped via Parcel Post or third class mail. Please allow 21 days for normal delivery. For faster service add 75¢ for special handling charges.

Institutions can be billed.

OTHER REPORTS

- ☐ THE ORIGINS OF HUMAN BONDS by Selma Fraiberg
- ☐ STUDENT REVOLTS by Walter Laqueur
- ☐ THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF HERBERT MARCUSE by George Kateb
- ☐ THE NEW YORK INTELLECTUALS: A Chronicle & A Critique by Irving Howe
- ☐ THE POVERTY OF AFFLUENCE by Robert Lekachman

☐ CONDITION OF JEWISH BELIEF
A significant contemporary restatement of the basic concepts of Judaism and their relevance to the 60's. 38 leading Rabbis and theologians speak out. Hardcover $5.95

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Shalit Case

Robert Alter

—But do you know what a nation means? says John Wyse.
—Yes, says Bloom.
—What is it? says John Wyse.
—A nation? says Bloom. A nation is the same people living in the same place.
—By God, then, says Ned, laughing, if that's so I'm a nation for I'm living in the same place for the past five years.
So of course everyone had a laugh at Bloom and says he, trying to muck out of it:
—Or also living in different places.
—James Joyce, *Ulysses*

THE JEWS, one hardly needs to be reminded, are a historical anomaly. People, religious confession, nation, ethnic group, culture, race—all these rubrics have been variously applied to them, each with a certain degree of evident justification, none ever really adequate to describe the bewildering historical phenomenon of a people that is also a religion (or alternately, a religion that is also a people), constituting a ghostly vestige of a past sovereign state and the potential citizenry of a new one, even as it continues "living in different places." Since the Enlightenment, with the proliferation of ideologies of Jewish existence, Jews themselves have added considerably to the intrinsic historical confusion by often insisting, according to the particular glare or flicker of their various ideological lights, that one and only one of these rubrics should be applied to them, that all the others were a horror and an abomination in the eyes of the Lord, or of right reason, or of progressive social consciousness. It is not surprising, then, that the re-establishment of a Jewish state should focus and compound the anomaly of Jewish identity, bringing together all the tensions implicit in the historical paradox, providing a public forum for their collision. I am increasingly skeptical whether in our lifetime any agency, group, or individual in Israel will even begin to find a generally satisfactory answer to the question, "Who is a Jew?," but it seems to be an inner necessity of Israeli society to wrestle with this question continually and to thrash it out in public once every few years. Because the facts of Israel's national existence are peculiar, such an impulse to self-definition is understandable and in a way even commendable. The forms, however, which the debate takes are often so absurd or so deplorable that one is tempted to view the whole phenomenon in anthropological terms as a national rite of self-abasement Israelis feel compelled to carry out once every five years or so, during which license is given to political, religious, and intellectual leaders to display their full capacity for mental rigidity, moral obtuseness, alarmist rhetoric, hypocrisy, or plain silliness.

Before I go into the details of the current controversy, some background information may be helpful. Although Israel's Declaration of Independence guarantees "complete equality of social and political rights for all its citizens, without distinction of creed, race, or sex," Israeli law does in fact make one important practical distinction between Jews and others. Since the state is avowedly conceived not as an end in itself but as the instrument of the Jewish people, a permanent place of refuge and protection for Jews all over the world, any Jew, according to the 1950 Law of Return, has the right to immigrate together with special economic privileges, tax exemptions, and housing aid, during the period of his absorption. (Gentile immigrants are by no means discouraged, but they must undergo a period of naturalization, and they do not have the same initial advantages.)

Now, the Law of Return presupposes that we know, at least legally, who is a Jew, but problems can arise in cases of mixed marriages, apostates from Judaism, or dubious converts to Judaism. The first great public debate on legal Jewish identity took place in 1958 over the question of whether in mixed marriages where the wife was gentile—many such couples had come to Israel from Poland in 1956—the children could be registered as Jews. (The unambigous halakhic ruling on mixed marriages has always been that the child is considered to follow the religion of the mother.) At the time of the controversy, the Minister of the Interior was a member of Ahdut Ha-avoda, a secularist, moderate-left labor party, and he ruled that anyone could be listed in his identity papers as a Jew simply by virtue of his own declaration, or, in the case of minors, that of his parents. In the subsequent uproar the National Religious

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

party left the government coalition, and intermittent but often acrimonious debate on the issue continued until 1960, when a compromise was reached in which the portfolio of Minister of the Interior was given to the National Religious party and a regulation was issued that the religion of such minors would not be identified in their registration papers. Thus, the Orthodox prevented the promulgation of any registration directives that would directly contravene the Halakhah, but no law was passed making it obligatory to use the halakhic definition of a Jew for registering Jews in civil documents.

This last point is especially important for following the two subsequent disputes because the relation between civil and religious law in Israel is often misunderstood by outside observers, the more ignorant of whom actually imagine Israel as a "theocracy." Israelis distinguish between *hok* (secular law) and Halakhah (religious law), and the firm underlying assumption of their legal system is that the state is a *medinat hok,* governed by a secular law which is enacted by an elected legislature, the Knesset, to be adjudicated by secular, not rabbinic, courts. The Halakhah can become binding upon all Israeli citizens only in specifically delimited areas where the Knesset, by its own legislative action, decides to make the Halakhah the law of the land. The one important—for many, notorious—area where this has actually occurred is in the laws of marriage and divorce: there is no civil marriage in Israel, and all Jewish citizens who seek marriage or divorce within Israeli borders must comply with the procedures and regulations of the Orthodox rabbinate. In the matter of Jewish identity, although the Ministry of the Interior after 1960 was in the hands of an Orthodox Jew, he was not empowered, without supporting legislation from the Knesset, to make the halakhic standards binding in listing citizens on their identity cards as Jews, and this fact will be important to keep in mind in relation to the most recent test case.

Meanwhile, in 1962 the Israeli Supreme Court was confronted with an inverted version of the question, "Who is a Jew?" in the case of Brother Daniel, the Carmelite monk born of Jewish parents who still considered himself a member of the Jewish people, despite his conversion, and who therefore petitioned to be accepted as a citizen not through naturalization but by virtue of the Law of Return. The interesting paradox in the Brother Daniel case is that by halakhic standards he *was* still a Jew, since Judaism, like Catholicism, recognizes conversion into but not out of the faith: in the classic rabbinic formulation, "A Jew, even if he has sinned, remains a Jew" (*Sanhedrin* 44a). The Court, however, decided that in the plain-language, secular use of the term, Brother Daniel could not be considered a Jew, because he had separated himself from the historical community of Israel through his conversion to Catholicism. The clear implication of this decision was that, for civil purposes, the question of who is a Jew could be dealt with by secular courts without reference to halakhic standards. Instructively, the Orthodox groups acquiesced in the decision, presumably because it was a matter of excluding a dubious Jew rather than including one: in all these disputes, it is of course true that the Orthodox sincerely want to maintain absolute fidelity to what they conceive as an eternal, unchanging law, but I think one can also detect an uneasy, perhaps even fearful, psychology of separatism in their attitude both to the traditional law and to the most pressing facts of historical change in which Israel is so crucially involved.

As a general rule-of-thumb, I would suggest that the "historical" implications of these recurrent debates on who is a Jew are far more limited than their participants like to imagine, and if there is anything of significance to be learned from them, it is about the mentality of the debaters and the nature of what might be called the politics of culture in Israel. To see how this principle may operate in the most recent controversy, it will be necessary first to sort out the essential facts. Binyamin Shalit, a career officer in the Israeli navy, a native of Haifa, and the son of Jewish parents, is married to a Scottish woman of Christian descent who has settled with him in Haifa (though she has not become an Israeli citizen), where she has borne him two children, a son and a daughter. Both children, as natives, are automatically Israeli citizens, but a question arises concerning their religious and ethnic identification. Before proceeding to the nature of Shalit's difficulties and his appeal, another technical explanation, I am afraid, will be necessary. Israeli identity cards include two related items—religion and *le'om* (approximately: "national-ethnic group"). *Le'om,* a category that does not exist in the Halakhah, would seem to derive historically from similar categories on the internal passports of Russia and the old Austro-Hungarian empire, where such identification presumably had a certain usefulness because of the multi-national character of those states. Some Israelis argued for the removal of the *le'om* category back in the late 50's, fearing it might be used to discriminate against Arab citizens, and at one point in the Shalit case, the Supreme Court suggested that the government eliminate the category because of its legal vagueness and doubtful utility, but the government has maintained that the category is necessary because it provides a convenient way of distinguishing between Arabs and Jews for security purposes. How true this is I am not in a position to ascertain, but with a variety of incidents of urban terrorism over the past two years involving Israeli Arabs, it would be presumptuous for an outsider to judge such matters.

Binyamin and Ann Shalit, who consider them-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

selves atheists, had the religion entry in their children's papers filled in with the word "none," but when the local registrar, following the 1960 directive of the Minister of the Interior, wrote "no registration" under the category *le'om*, Shalit filed a legal protest, which eventually came before the Supreme Court. It was Shalit's contention that since he and his wife were not religionists, he could not in good conscience ask her to convert and then have the children converted, as Halakhah would require; his children, however, were being raised with a strong sense of participation in the national-historical community of Jews, were certainly thought of as Jews by other Israelis, and hence had the right to be listed under the Jewish *le'om* on their identity cards. Shalit tried to illustrate the kind of contradictions involved in ignoring considerations of national consensus and common sense to define *le'om* by religious law only: he, for example, a career officer in the Israeli navy, could not register his children as Jews, while Kemal Nimri, one of the leaders of *Al Fatah*, would in principle be able to list himself as a Jew because his mother was Jewish. On January 23, 1970, the Supreme Court decided by a vote of five to four in favor of Shalit, and ordered the Minister of the Interior and the Haifa district registration clerk to register the *le'om* of the Shalit children as Jewish.

The manner in which the Court rendered its opinion in this case is itself instructive. The close vote suggests how deeply divided Israeli society in general is on these issues, though it must be added that of the four dissenting justices, only two, Silberg and Kister, explicitly stated that registration should definitely be in accordance with the Halakhah. Each of the nine justices felt called upon to render a detailed individual opinion, the collected opinions running to a book of 180 pages. The fundamental yet elusive character of the question of Jewish identity led these learned jurists to range in their discourse from sociology and history to philosophy and belles-lettres, drawing not only on Israeli legal precedents, but on a variety of rabbinic sources, and on a peculiar assortment of modern writers from Renan and Adam Mickiewicz to Ahad Ha-am, Yehezkel Kaufmann, and S. N. Eisenstadt.

Nevertheless, the majority justices went out of their way to stress that they were *not* considering the general question of who is a Jew—because it was a matter of ideological dispute not appropriate for the Court to take up and because the question itself was susceptible of too many interpretations and too many possible answers. Rather, insisted the majority justices, they were deciding on the limited technical question of who may be listed as a Jew under the category *le'om* on an identity card. This position was stated quite clearly and, I think, candidly, and it strikes me as a thoroughly correct position to have taken: if the meanings of being a Jew are multiple and ambiguous, all a court can reasonably do is try to answer the question of who is a Jew for the purposes of a given law, and neither logic nor the nature of composite legal systems precludes the possibility that someone who is a Jew for the purposes of one law may not be for the purposes of another. And especially because the category of *le'om* is intrinsically vague and has no halakhic status whatsoever, the reasoning of those who denounced the decision as a betrayal of all Jewish tradition looks suspiciously murky on a very basic point. I might add that since the reported rationale for retaining the somewhat dubious category *le'om* is a consideration of security, the meaning of the term ought to be construed not as national-ethnic group in the abstract, but national-ethnic group in relation to the question of security. In this practically defined context, there can be little doubt that, whatever the Halakhah says about who is a member of the Jewish people-faith, the *le'om* of Kemal Nimri would be Arab and the *le'om* of Binyamin Shalit's children, Jewish. Moreover, in allowing the Shalit children into the civil community of Jews, the Court was acting in perfect consistency with its earlier decision to exclude Brother Daniel—that is, for the purposes of civil definition it again put aside halakhic criteria and used as a touchstone what amounts to a consensual or man-in-the-street notion of who should be allowed to call himself a Jew.*

It is hard to see how the Supreme Court decision, carefully restricted as it was meant to be, could have had very far-reaching implications for future Jewish history, but in the hullabaloo that followed, the opponents of the decision chose to consider the justices' claim that they were ruling only on a technical matter of registration as a transparent expression of bad faith. Thus, the Orthodox press shrieked to its readers in great black headlines, Court Ruling Murderous to Survival of People; and the National Religious party threatened to leave the government coalition if the Knesset did not immediately pass a law to cancel the effect of the Supreme Court decision. Though the Israeli Supreme Court enjoys immense prestige within the country—indeed, is the only branch of government that has continually evinced a high level of professional competence and integrity—it does not have the same powers as its American counterpart because there is no Israeli equivalent of the American system of checks and balances. Since Israel has no written constitution, the Court cannot very well

*Since Justice Agranat, in supporting the minority view, claimed that "there was no consensus concerning [who is a Jew] among the enlightened section of the public," it is worth mentioning that a public opinion survey undertaken in Israel for the London *Jewish Chronicle* in November 1968, showed 59 per cent opposed to identifying religion and *le'om* in the legal definition of a Jew, while only 32 per cent were in favor of the practice.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

declare a law unconstitutional, though it can abrogate any Knesset law that it considers to be a violation of one of the Knesset's own, quasi-constitutional Basic Laws, which remain limited in number and scope. (Symptomatically, one of the chief motives in the decision of Ben-Gurion and the Mapai majority to oppose a written constitution in the protracted debate over that question in 1949-50 was their fear of the necessity for codifying the relation between religion and state. Israelis, as that decision itself illustrates, seem to repeat almost ritually that they must avoid a *Kulturkampf* at all costs, and just as frequently, so it seems, they go through the first motions of such a struggle.)

Golda Meir's government and the majority coalition in the Knesset acceded to the Orthodox demands with much of the grace and all of the celerity of a bridegroom brought to a shotgun wedding in the ninth month of the bride's pregnancy. Political leaders, the Prime Minister herself among them, made emotional, not to say maudlin, speeches about the fateful dangers of tragically sundering the Jewish people; the Knesset bypassed its own procedures for promulgation, review, and multiple readings of new legislation, and in a matter of days passed a law that allayed the theological terrors of the National Religious party and kept it in the government coalition. As is generally true in parliamentary politics, the result was a somewhat muddled compromise that had the virtue of being no real disaster for either side in the controversy. Binyamin Shalit was allowed to register the *le'om* of his children as he wished. For the future, the law enjoined registration officials against listing a Jewish *le'om* for the children of mixed marriages where the mother was gentile.

The prohibitionary aspect, then, of the halakhic position had become the law of the land, though it is not quite correct to say, as many Israeli commentators did, that registration henceforth had to be strictly in accordance with the Halakhah, for, in that event, the child of a Christian mother would have to be listed according to the group of origin of the mother, while the legal directive is now again to put "no registration" in such cases. In compensation, anyone married to a Jew, and the children or even grandchildren of mixed marriages, are now entitled to enjoy all "the benefits accorded under the Law of Return, the Citizenship Law, and every other law which contains provisions for [Jewish] immigrants," so that beyond the symbolic declaration of *le'om* all legal inequities pertaining to mixed marriages have been removed. The new law, moreover, recognizes conversions to Judaism performed abroad even when they are not done according to halakhic standards, and it urges the rabbinate to show more dispatch and flexibility in its own conversion procedures, though this last exhortation, in view of long-standing practices of the Israeli rabbinate, is at best quixotic, at worst a purely hypocritical gesture.*

A secularist could reasonably view this outcome as regrettable but hardly catastrophic, just as the original decision of the Supreme Court was hardly catastrophic for the halakhic Jew, whatever the outcry. In this case, the National Unity government had again succumbed needlessly to pressure from religious groups, thus allowing the Orthodox to impose their will on the majority of Israelis in a matter of principle though, it must be added, one of no great practical import, at least on the face of things. And the breakup of the present coalition, a consummation devoutly to be wished on other, more serious grounds, would of course make it possible to repeal the law by a simple majority vote of Knesset. To judge, however, by much of the comment on both sides of the dispute, nothing less than the historical survival of the Jewish people was at stake, on the one hand, or the survival of democratic institutions in Israeli society, on the other. Since it is my contention that what is most instructive in all this is the tenor of the debate, not its substance, I would like to offer a sampling of responses from both sides of the controversy.

THE RHETORIC invoked on the Left to attack the government's maneuver was predictable. I sometimes suspect that Israel has the oldest Left in the world still alive and kicking, in all senses of the word; the language of accusation, for example, of the newspaper *Lamerhav* (Ahdut Ha-avoda) is redolent of, say, the French Left *circa* 1890: "An utter defeat (the Supreme Court decision) served the religious camp as the base for a renewed assault, and in a few days the leaders of the National Religious party succeeded in advancing the process of the clericalization of the state in a way they had failed to do in the course of twenty years." Somewhat more surprisingly, the influential paper *Ha-aretz* (independent, though generally pro-government) abandoned its usually circumspect, moderate editorial tone to announce with apocalyptic portentousness that "the Middle Ages were returning." Ammon Rubinstein, a respected columnist and dean of the law school at Tel Aviv University, suggested sarcastically that if Mrs. Meir were really so concerned with discouraging intermarriage—she actually contended, in blithe disregard of the sociology and mentality of Diaspora Jews, that the Shalit decision would encourage them to intermarry—then she really ought to ban miscegenation in Israel,

* As this goes to press (early June), the National Religious party, because of a new test case involving a woman converted to Judaism by a Reform rabbi, is in fact attempting—though with no apparent hope of success—to pass a law that would exclude from registration as a Jew any convert who has not gone through the Orthodox procedures. For those who fight the battles of the Lord, the appetite for new conquests is indeed insatiable.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and if she had difficulty formulating the law, South Africa would provide her a handy model.

While the new legislation was still being debated in Knesset, the novelist, Yoram Kaniuk, married to an American gentile, pathetically announced in an open letter to Golda Meir that if the law were passed, he, and many like him, would be compelled to emigrate, "because [our] children would be deprived of first-class citizenship and would become objects of scorn and derision." Concluding his plea with an allusion to the likely impact of the new law on world opinion of Israel, Kaniuk saw fit to speak in the following terms: "I doubt if others will always be ready to understand the audacity [in the original, *chutzpah*] of people who require the entire world to be enlightened while at home they permit themselves to be separatists, incorrigible fanatics, and promulgators of racist doctrines."*

UNDERSTANDABLY, the rhetoric and logic of the anti-Shalit forces attained an even higher pitch of perturbation. These forces, by the way, were not limited to the Orthodox, but were, rather, a coalition of spokesmen for religion, Mapai faithfuls jumping nimbly to the whip of party discipline, and a variegated group of people I would describe as sentimental nationalists. The statements of most of the party faithfuls (for example, the editorials of *Davar*, the Mapai daily newspaper) were what one would have expected—a mindless, or cynical, mouthing of Mrs. Meir's stated position, with much grave, vague talk about not encouraging assimilation, about avoiding a *Kulturkampf* and keeping the people together. Of the sentimental nationalists, the best example I have seen is a column by the poet, Natan Alterman (since deceased), in the independent afternoon daily, *Maariv*. After a series of somber reflections on the profundity of the issue being debated, which was nothing less than the cutting-off of the Jewish people from its historical origins, Alterman concluded with an invocation of Soviet Jewry's tragic, heroic struggle for self-assertion. My translation deliberately reproduces the tortured syntax of the original sentence because this chaotic use of language on the part of a professional writer is itself evidence of the way sticky emotion gums up the function of normal rational processes in these debates.

> When one tries to compare this struggle of young Jews in Russia—which is in essence a fateful awareness of origins and of profound and reawakening connections with their roots—with the struggle undertaken among us today to limit Jewish belonging to a sense of subjective attachment and to a "declaration in good faith," in the end one must wonder whether at least the *timing* of this aspiration to impoverish the concept "Jew" of all content beyond the juridic-legalistic old-new Bundist-Leftist approach of Major Shalit and his supporters—at least the *timing* is not the most fortuitous.

How wildly all this misrepresents what was actually at issue should be self-evident (the characterization of Shalit's orientation as "Bundist-Leftist" is particularly amusing); but Alterman's use of Soviet Jewry as a rhetorical club against the Shalit supporters is ironic, for, as several commentators observed, the new Knesset law would, if anything, have a certain deterrent effect on Soviet Jews loyal to Israel. Among the untold numbers of such Jews, there are, predictably, many who are committed to being Jews though married to gentile women, and it might at least give them pause to think that if they could ever emigrate to Israel their children would not be officially recognized as Jews by ethnic nationality. In the last two and a half years of his life Alterman spent much of his energy promulgating the views of the Greater Israel group, and, at least in his case, there would seem to be a direct connection between the kind of nationalistic feeling that leads to territorial imperialism, on the one hand, and to exclusionist ethnic loyalty, on the other.†

"The taste of bathos," Alexander Pope once wrote in his best high-ironic manner, "is implanted by Nature itself in the soul of man," and one could hardly find better evidence for this assertion than when Jews enter into heated debate on who is a Jew. Predictably, the nadir of bathos in the Shalit controversy was reached when sentimental nationalism joined forces with religious fervor. After the new legislation was passed by the Knesset, Rabbi Meir Yehuda Getz, the rabbi appointed to deal with religious matters affecting the Western Wall, and the father of a boy who died in the capture of the Wall, wrote a letter to Mrs. Meir, the text of which was reproduced in *Maariv*. The excesses of the rabbi have at least the sincerity of his feelings as a defense, while the cheap attempt of the reporter to cash in on patriotic sentimentalism is simply indefensible. Here is the last paragraph of the news item, as it appeared in *Maariv*.

> Those who saw Rabbi Getz Friday morning at the Wall attest to the fact that he wrote the letter to Mrs. Golda Meir while wrapped in his prayer-shawl and phylacteries, with his eyes streaming tears. This is what he wrote: "Happy are you, and happy is your portion, for you have been privileged to save our ancient nation from inner schism and spiritual collapse. Our

*The charge of racism was much bandied about, but the forthright halakhic practice, going back to the earliest talmudic times, is to make any convert a full-fledged member of the Jewish people (or "race") when he accepts the Jewish faith. This does not, of course, solve Shalit's problem of conscience, or the new historical dilemma of a large community of Jews, clearly regarded as Jews, who are themselves no longer professors of the Jewish faith.

† This connection may in fact be active on a larger scale: one of the most troubling political developments in Israel since the Six-Day War is a growing affinity between the National Religious party and the rightist, hard-line Gahal party.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

people that dwells in Zion was confronted with a danger that would have brought total destruction upon it, God forbid. Even in a secular perspective, Saladin succeeded in defeating the Crusaders because of their assimilation in the native population. As we know, this example is the very one our enemies today keep in mind. Your proud, authentically Jewish position has brought a swift and final solution to this problem. Who knows, perhaps it is just for such a time as this that you have come to royal position [the words of Mordecai to Esther in the biblical story]. Blessings to you, Madam Prime Minister, and I fervently pray for you and for all this people, be strong and of good heart.

To be fair, there were more moderate voices in Israel speaking out on the issue, even if they tended to get drowned in the general clamor, and some Israelis also showed a clear appreciation of the farcical aspects in the forensic excesses of their fellow citizens. The best statement of this sort that I have seen is a column in *Lamerhav* by the novelist, Hanoch Bartov. His view of the case and of the reaction to it strikes me as refreshingly sane and reasonable. On the large, theoretical question of who is a Jew—what he calls the "historiosophical question"—Bartov tends to sympathize with Justices Kister and Silberg, who pointed out that the unique historical circumstances and extraterritorial condition of the Jews make it very difficult to apply the usual criteria for defining nationality. On a more practical level, Bartov recognizes a compelling necessity to facilitate the absorption of the increasing numbers of immigrants from Russia and the West that Israel anticipates in the coming years; and in regard to the human problems of this potential community of newcomers, the Court decision seems a sound measure. Bartov sees the real "meaning" of the entire affair in terms of what it implies about current Israeli politics: Golda Meir's government capitulated without struggle to the demands of an Orthodox minority in a way that previous administrations refused to do. Finally, Bartov is keenly aware of how ludicrous the debate becomes in the argumentation of its shriller participants, and I here offer his comments on a real pearl of absurdity, a statement by a Member of Knesset:

> Listening to the uproar raised this week, one would imagine that the State of Israel were flooded with hundreds of thousands of gentile women and children of gentile women, demanding their right of life in the Jewish state. Things reached the point where M. K. Mordecai Zer of the Alignment said, according to *Haaretz* of this Wednesday, "Now anyone who feels like it can proclaim himself a Jew. The Court decision will open the Israel Defense Force to thousands of *Fatah* people." I would like to believe that the honorable M. K., for whom I voted, did not speak in this fashion, but if that is what he really said, I wonder about myself—whom have I delegated as my representative in the legislature?

The fact that such a dispute could move strong public men to tears of self-pity and stir cool reasoners to somersaults of sophistry is itself symptomatic of what is both uneasy and unique about the conditions of Israel's national existence. People in general will tend to absolutize the conditional, convert into portentous symbol what is incidental, accidental, or even trivial, when they are caught up in a central preoccupation, so that they begin to see everywhere the face of what they fear, the promise of what they seek. The Shalit dispute gives very little indication of what eventual conclusions Israeli society may draw about who is a Jew, but it does lucidly reveal how important the question remains to Israelis, secular as well as religious, how much it is a national preoccupation, even amid the rumble of guns along the Suez and the Syrian border. Or perhaps I should say, especially amid the rumble of guns. For if the security situation was occasionally invoked by spokesmen for the government position in a futile attempt to silence debate—"in a time of national emergency the people must at all costs remain united"—the actual impact of the military conflict was to serve as a stimulus for debate. The implicit sense of many who took part in the controversy seemed to be something like this: if we have come here from all over the world, and now we are called upon to lay down our lives in defense of our right to exist here as a nation, it is desperately important that we know who we are, who we want to be, or who we ought to be.

THE CLASSIC Zionist thinkers imagined that the problematic consciousness of one's Jewishness was a product of the Jew's marginal existence in the Diaspora, and that the "normalization" of Jewish life in a Jewish state would put an end to such troubled sense of identity. There is an irony, then, in the fact that this problematic consciousness of Jewish identity among Israelis is precisely what reveals most sharply the profoundly Zionist character of Israel. For what was clear above all else in the Shalit controversy was that virtually all the disputants assumed without question that Israel is not a state like other states but the sovereign arm and territorial focal point of a Jewish people that exists throughout the world. Thus, at least on the level of slogans and national bugaboos, the threat of "splitting the Jewish people" serves almost as an Israeli equivalent of the Red Scare in America during the early 50's: it is surely revealing that the very words used one week by the traditionalists to describe the Court ruling were taken up a week later by their antagonists to describe the new Knesset law—the change, each side claimed for different reasons, would tend to "drive a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

deep wedge between Israel and Diaspora Jewry."

The marked tendency to exaggerate the implications of an internal dispute over registration procedures was itself largely a result of the sense that Israel is intimately, fatefully bound with the far reaches of the Diaspora and must exercise the most scrupulous care in all it does that might conceivably impinge on the Diaspora. The kind of assumption of belonging spelled out by Shmuel Schnitzer in an article in *Maariv* was tacitly held by virtually all the participants in the dispute: "Only a *part* of the Jewish people, 18 per cent, lives in the State of Israel. . . . In matters of citizenship the State is sovereign, but in questions of *nationality* [*le'om*] it has no authority to decide. . . . As members of the Jewish *le'om* Israelis are a *minority,* and any attempt to decide in the name of all Jews . . . would fall into the category of *usurpation.*" One should note here the explicitly political vocabulary applied to Jewish peoplehood, with profuse italic emphasis, by Schnitzer. Others, of course, drew very different conclusions, although they shared Schnitzer's strong sense that the Jewish people in Israel and abroad constitutes a single, quasi-political entity.* This assumption, indeed, is so basic to Israeli thinking that it is even a matter of practical foreign policy. Thus, Israel, mindful of its ties to black Africa, has refused to recognize Rhodesia, where there is a very small and transient Jewish population, but it maintains diplomatic relations with South Africa, though at the lowest possible non-ambassadorial level, because it feels it has a responsibility to help protect the precarious interests of South Africa's 120,000 Jews.

Those who suggest, then, that Israel might solve its conflict with the Arabs by repealing the Law of Return and in other ways "de-Zionizing" itself make about as much sense as someone proposing that France end its historical tensions with England by adopting the English language and culture. This living community of people, with the exception of a tiny majority within it, is firm in the conviction that it exists in the Middle East as a sovereign entity in order to be a Jewish community, with all that implies of connection with Jews elsewhere. What it cannot agree upon, what it is therefore driven to ludicrous extremes to argue about, is precisely where the lines of demarcation for Jewishness are to be drawn. Viewed cynically, the Israelis' concern with Diaspora Jewry could be explained as a mere reflex of self-interest: they want immigrants from America, Russia, and Western Europe because they are afraid of Levantinization; they want greater numbers of Jews to bolster their ranks against the enemies around them. These are, to be sure, powerful motives, but they do not entirely explain Israel's sense of attachment to the Diaspora, or even Israel's eagerness for increased immigration. Although one cannot neatly separate self-interest from human concern, there is also an observable element of genuine fellow-feeling in the attitude of many Israelis toward Jews throughout the world, and at least one motive for their desire to see more immigration is their conviction that they have undertaken a uniquely challenging and momentous enterprise in re-establishing a Jewish state, an enterprise in which they would like more of their fellow Jews to join them. A corollary, however, of this sense of global Jewish solidarity would seem to be the necessity to live with the tensions of an ongoing, perhaps unresolvable, debate about the legal, historical, and theological complications of who is a Jew. The inner divisions on this question within Israel will, I think, continue to prevent the Israeli government from codifying too much, too absolutely, while it is even safer to predict that for the happy, dispassionate few in Israel, the disputants will continue to provide the amusement of what must surely be one of the most peculiar of national pastimes.

*Daniel J. Elazar has recently argued that this very sense is growing among Diaspora Jews as well. His general definition of the peculiarly Jewish solidarity is apt: "Not the least of the emerging concerns is the redefinition of the psychological and institutional lines binding Jews into a polity of a unique sort, one formed and sustained by consent alone . . . within an objective framework that encourages such consent by making the Jews a distinctive group, with a common interest in the survival of all its parts." "The Rediscovered Polity," *American Jewish Yearbook,* 1969.

Commentary Study Guides

- For individuals, libraries and discussion groups
- Published monthly
- Cover the major articles in each issue
- Mailed *first class,* in advance of Commentary magazine.

Subscription rates: 1 year, $3.00; 3 years, $8.00; 5 years, $13.00.

COMMENTARY STUDY GUIDES 165 E. 56 St., New York, N.Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Radicalized Professor: A Portrait

Dorothy Rabinowitz

HIS CHILDHOOD lies not far behind him. Although he is, or is approaching, forty or more, he has registered no departures from the straight course that he took from boyhood to professorhood. More than most men, he takes with him into adult life the assumptions of a promising childhood. All his life, on straight route to the university career, he has been accorded and he has accepted the honors conferred on promising young men. Now he is still, at forty, a promising young man, soft-voiced, sincere, cultivated, and ingratiatingly even-tempered. (Indeed, up to the dawn of the campus wars, he displayed signs of owning no temper at all.) He paused to marry someone, en route to the degree. (She, too, is vaguely involved in the humanities, but she has years earlier put her thesis outline away to take up the less rigorous construction of wife to scholar: she had expected to do that.) Marriage does not appear to have altered his life, and fatherhood is a pleasant noise of creatures which, he understands, he has brought into the world. He accepts that fact. Somewhere, though, he records his disbelief; he himself is yet a boy, something tells him: he has always gone to school and he is still in school, doing promisingly well.

Something disturbs him. Everyone he knows now does promisingly well. He is no longer the best student in his college classes and no longer distinguished as one of the top young men of his graduate school. Now he is surrounded by the most productive, if not the best, minds of all the graduate schools in the country. They work together in one large department, each member of which is a high achiever like himself. Here, everyone excels, like himself, in reading and understanding literature, and all have written lengthily on their discoveries in Shakespeare, Cibber, Shaftesbury, and Nathanael West. Now, his unconscious begins to construct an attitude in response to all this peerdom, a sneaking belief that this occupation with literature and the humanities must be a hoax, or at the very least a soft touch, a thing of no value for exacting nothing tough, real, and hard from its aspirants. For if it were a thing of value, it could not admit so many; it could not yield credentials to so many like himself, who had merely to read literature and to report on his reading all the school years through boyhood and adolescence and then uninterruptedly to take up the same work as a man. As a man, he writes reports on his reading in the form of articles, and for a book, he understands, he can use his doctoral thesis which undertakes to restore the reputation of Colley Cibber. For this they pay him and give him classes to report to three days a week. He does it, dimly aware that he is not as happy as another young man might be with these achievements. And he is all unaware that he has begun to nurture real resentments against the humanities and the college classroom which have delivered him from promise, into populous oblivion.

Once, the college classroom was a place reserved for a special few. Now, the possession of the university by the many (there are perhaps forty members in his department, half of them young men), has made him know in his deepest unconscious that the university culture and its society is really a commonplace with pretensions (it is now less difficult to break into than any of the more formidable construction unions) and the position of teacher is just so much status fakery. Restless and resentful, he makes his way about the campus feeling most of the time helplessly sincere, for his fraudulence is very deep: he is in mortal terror of his personal resentments and obliged not to know them. He has so well kept such secrets from himself (a life spent in the genteel, protective environment of the academy has helped him that way), that he does not know that he goes about feeling resentful and cheated of his position in society.

He has other secrets. He denies to memory that he has undertaken a life in a university for the privileges and the mastery which the academic life yields to its members. He has cared for the prestige, for the associations of an elite community. (He has been disappointed: no such psychic fruits were yielded by the academic life, which fails to be prestigious or elitist *enough*.) Now he has forsworn prestige and elitism as enemies of the people, betrayers of the community.

There are, he suspects, some people up there in the university hierarchy who do enjoy some of the prestige and the sense of mastery of which he has been cheated. (Thanks to that suspicion he is able to agree when students cry that the university conspires to cheat and to destroy the aspirations of black and Third-World people, and of youth.) He does not know why he understands them so well: unless, as he has been told by approving students and as he suspects himself, he is gifted with special empathy and social sensitivity. Nevertheless, he notes that most of his colleagues appear to be exhibiting the self-same gifts these days, and this makes him yet more resentful of a scheme which has reserved no single shred of distinction for him but it is imme-

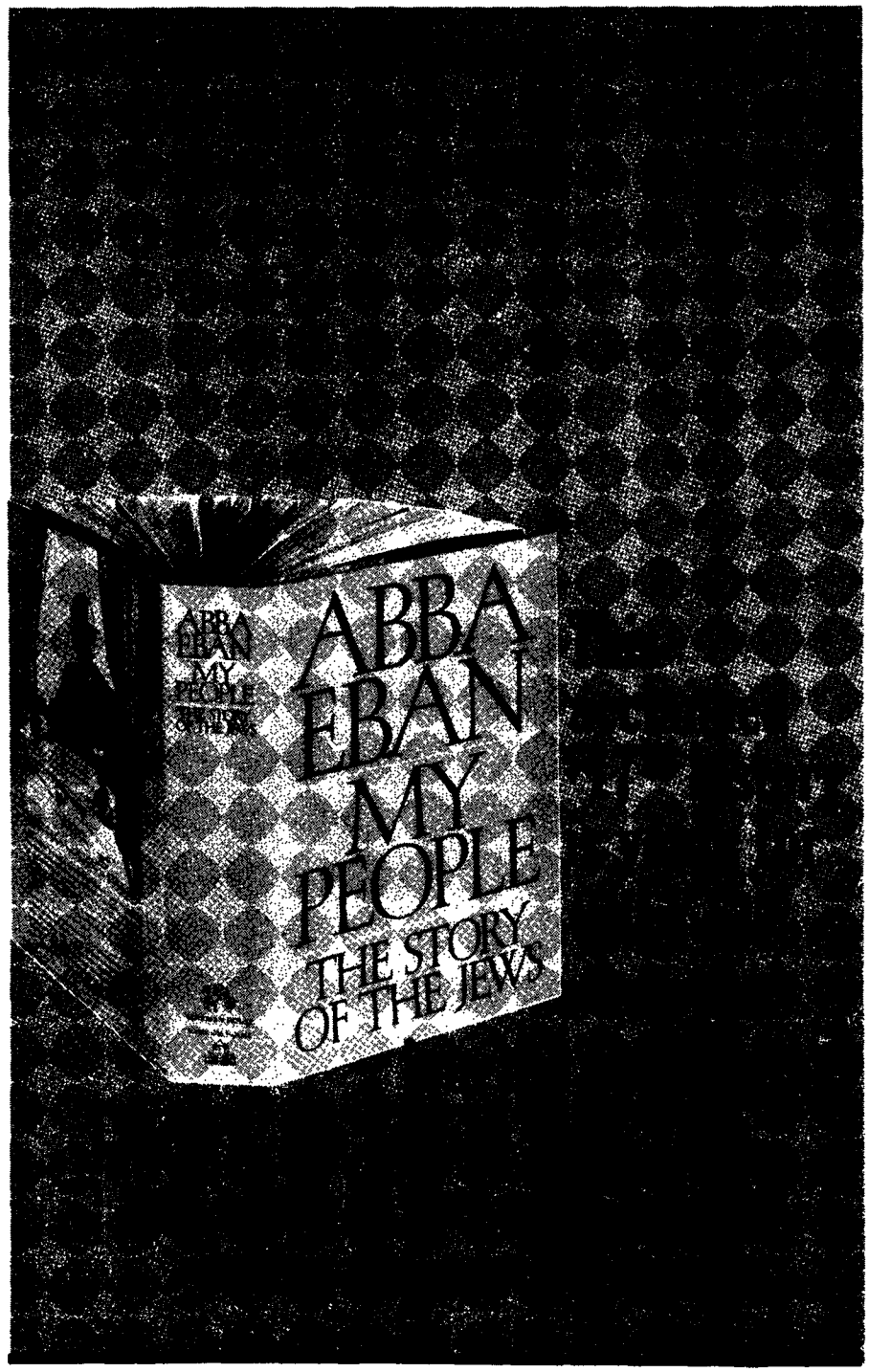
DOROTHY RABINOWITZ *is a regular contributor to these pages. In forthcoming issues of* COMMENTARY *we hope to present further portraits of familiar character-types in contemporary American culture.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

diately yielded to mobs of empathic and sensitive faculty. He notes that dozens of his colleagues concern themselves night and day with acute responsiveness. His anger and frustration grow (so many other empathizers and responders could not exist in a proper university scheme which had maintained the true, old standards and where only a prestigious fit and few dwelt). Those he suspects, still dwelling up there in the university hierarchy—who enjoy the benefits of the true old standards while he toils ignominiously among the many—they will get theirs, something whispers to him.

If his resentment grows deeper, the fraudulence, necessarily, grows by leaps and bounds: he does not know why, but now he is concerned passionately to open the doors of the university to everybody, whether they want to come or not. He is happy to give his classes over to students or to random speakers or to strolling activists. Now, he wants passionately to *expand* the faculty power, to share it with students and non-students, to give them credentials and powers of appointment; he is happy to yield his lectern to high-school students and junior-high-school students and feminists and Black Panthers who have come to the campus to share their relevance. Everyone is welcome to his status. He does not know why he does this, except that he is progressive and empathic, as his admiring students testify. He is not aware that it pleases him to avenge his secret old elitist dream; he has helped rub the rabble in the faces of those privileged few still up there enjoying the power and the glory. He believes passionately in the university of the people.

HE HAS another secret, not so well kept from his consciousness; he expects to be exposed one day. He has needed the sanctuary the university offered; he has leaned heavily on the self-validation conferred by the university role. The role was one's credentials for being taken seriously if all other enterprise in the world failed (or had never been assayed at all). Now, the rebel students have, all unwittingly, alarmed him with their simple name-calling: fake,



The Commentary Library
165 East 56th Street, New York, New York 10022

☐ Please send me my copy of MY PEOPLE by Abba Eban and enroll me in The Commentary Library. My check for $3.00 is attached.

I agree to buy as few as three of the monthly selections or alternates during the next 12 months at the special member's price, (plus a small charge for postage and handling). All selections and alternates will be described for me in advance in The Jewish Book News, and I may decline any of them by returning the printed card provided. After completion of my short trial membership I will be entitled to earn free bonus books.

☐ I am already a member of The Commentary Library and would like to have MY PEOPLE for only $3.00. I agree to purchase an *additional* three selections during the coming year. My check for $3.00 is attached.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

phoney, blowhard, gutless, ballless, pretender. They are names perilously close to his correct (if secret) self-image. Now he hastens to admit that the academic community is composed of phonies, pretenders, uncommitted and pompous men. He agrees: the entire university system is fraudulent; and while he is at it, he agrees to everything else. (The university is a racist institution and is guilty of genocide and of making war on the Vietnamese people and of withholding bail from the Black Panthers.) He is not choosy about the details of the indictment. He has agreed to agree, from the moment he understood that he was guilty of the names they called and in imminent danger of experiencing his own fraudulence, his own pretensions, and his own servility.

HE HAS agreed to agree with everything for the very reasons which took him to the university life in such dependent condition. He cannot bear to be left out of a magic circle where power, glory, and virtue reside, if briefly; and in the rebellion against pomp, uninvolvement, and ball-lessness, he is free to deny his own unmanly fraudulence. About some things, he feels guilt—and rightly so. He is guilty, for example, of a deep belief that ideas are not "gut" issues. But all that time, before he made his alliance with enlightenment, he was dealing with concepts—ideas—whose worth he did not hold to be very valuable. (Ideas are simply what one teaches and one talks about when one makes a contract with the university. He never did see what good they were —they never did him any good— and he had little difficulty yielding them up to the greater realism of the New Left revolution.) And though he taught otherwise, he has always secretly believed that emotion is the opposite of reason. His concealment of that secret belief was altogether understandable in the halls of learning. Now, his belief is rescued by the wise children of the revolution who understand, exactly as he does, that simple schoolboy faith in the superiority of "feeling" to "thought." (Since his emotional life has been rendered well-nigh unavailable by the intellectualized control for which he volunteered the first day he thought of a life in the academy, it is not surprising that he should consider emotions exotic, and precious beyond reason.)

He has certain capacities. Now that he has made his alliance with enlightenment, he can exercise these capacities in a new and peculiarly satisfying way. He is capable, for instance, of a particular form of perception available only to people like himself, a unique capacity to observe certain things and to record the opposite of what he sees.

He may compare the treatment of the Jews under the Nazis and the treatment of black men in America and record that the treatment of black men in America is infinitely worse than the treatment the Jews suffered at the hands of the Nazis.

He may observe that there is a picture of the President of the United States holding a press conference and a picture of a National Guardsman kneeling to take aim, preparatory to shooting college students to death. He will record that the President caused the death of the students.

In addition to this capacity for recording the opposite of what he sees, he is capable of a selectivity available only to people like himself.

Asked to select a war criminal from a half-century's album of historical figures which include Hitler, Eichmann, Stalin, Tojo, and Himmler, he will select Hubert Humphrey.

Given the condition of militants toting guns and setting bombs and the condition of police toting guns and firing tear gas, he will perceive that the guns and bombs of the militants are symbols, while the guns and the tear gas of the police are weapons of murder and oppression.

Asked to select the most exciting literature he knows for introductory college courses, he selects black literature. (He is excited at the fact that black people can actually write books.) And he can communicate that excitement sincerely now, sensing that he is being meaningful for once; his students are excited that black people can actually write books too. The anonymous backwash of a vast Western literature never excited him as much as this meaningfulness.

IN ALL THESE capacities, his highly developed fraudulence has been no small help to him. Still, he is unhappy. Many of his colleagues share his talent for selection and reversal of perception. He has had constantly to learn to distinguish himself from them, and in doing so, he has, occasionally, been rewarded with a special moment of applause. He takes certain courageous and principled stands. Pondering the war in Vietnam and Cambodia, he concludes that the best solution to all this is to call for an end to university classes for the semester. Another solution: there will be no grades. Instead of classes, faculty and students will run from one quadrangle to another, to confer with each other until the semester (or the war) ends.

By this time, he has grown more and more self-assured in his new life as activist. He feels real; students testify that he is real. For the time being, his sense of fraudulence seems far from his consciousness. Now, he believes that he believes. He says that "unless repression and genocide are stopped short in America, there *can be* no literature." Now he can relax: the strain of pretending that the humanities were real and literature important is over. No business as usual. Now he is given over to the things he really believes: society is hateful; worthy men go unrewarded while a privileged few rule; existing society and the structure of the present university must be destroyed if the American people are to survive. He has not yet discovered why he understands this so well, but he is, forever, a promising young man, and in the rubble of the new university he may yet discover the shards of his own martyrdom.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Stands massively between Lyndon Johnson and history, an obstacle yet to be surmounted."—CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

The definitive edition of the brilliant case study in American foreign policy

THE DOMINICAN REVOLT

by THEODORE DRAPER

COMMENTARY published Theodore Draper's article on *The Dominican Crisis* three years ago, in December 1965. Within a matter of days, a New York *Times* editorial hailed it as "monumental." The weeks immediately following brought a torrent of mail applauding its achievement.

Sen. Ernest Gruening wished "that copies could be sent to every member of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate."

Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy called it "a complete observation of the whole Dominican movement."

Irving Howe wrote that it was "intellectual journalism at its best."

> The author of this remarkable article had already established himself as a uniquely conscientious and objective student of contemporary American politics. Previous writing on Latin America, as well as two published volumes in an exhaustive history of American Communism, had won him international acclaim. Theodore Draper's analysis of a crucial moment in American foreign policy which was all too evocative of the Bay of Pigs could not help but be of widespread interest.

Yet the immediate response to *The Dominican Crisis* exceeded all expectations. And the furor has never ceased. From Senator Gruening's letter to today, COMMENTARY has been besieged with requests for copies of the December 1965 issue, for reprints, for related books. Theodore Draper has also been besieged—by publishers eager to present his work to an enlarged audience in book form.

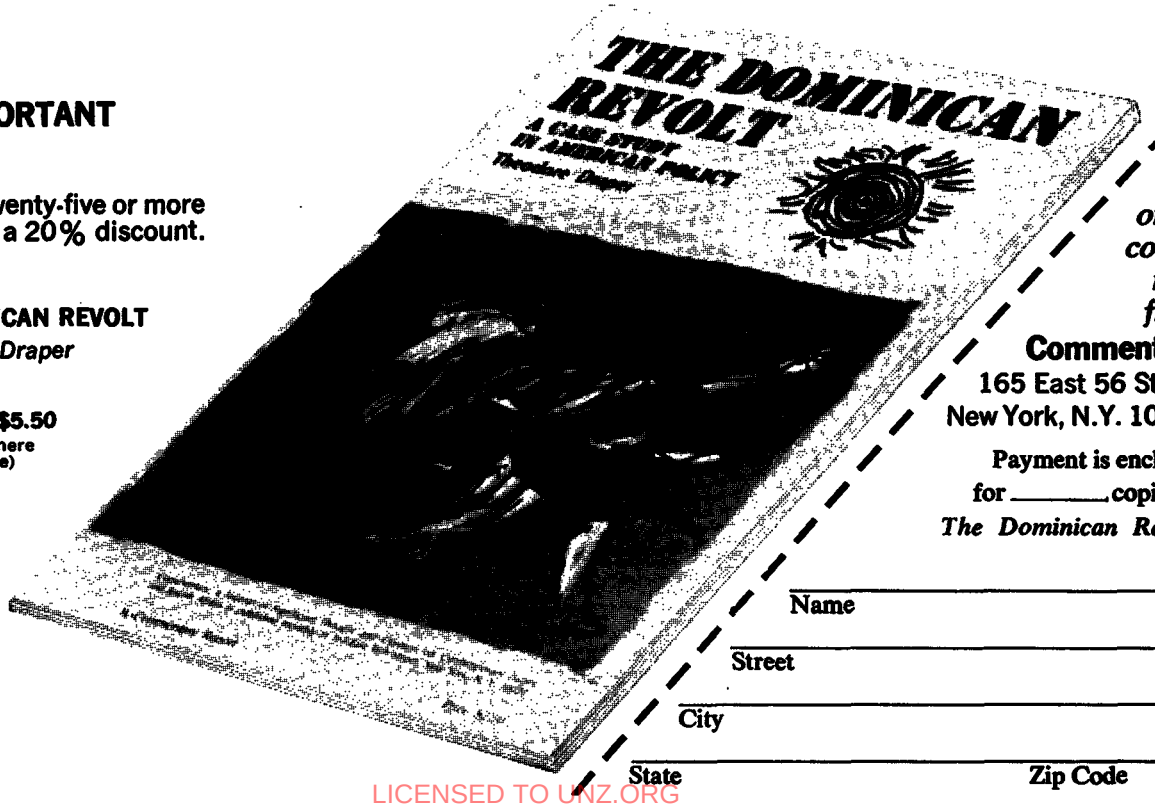
The reason is not hard to find. By meticulously dissecting American foreign policy as it applied to a political upheaval in one small country, Theodore Draper provided a wide screen on which could be viewed what had happened before—and what has happened since. *The Dominican Crisis* emerged as a primer for Vietnam.

Now, by special arrangement with Theodore Draper, COMMENTARY is pleased to issue an expanded version of *The Dominican Crisis* under the title *The Dominican Revolt*. Published as a flexible-cover 208-page book, it is almost three times as long as the original, with new facts and documents marshalled to clarify and support the author's line of thought.

Inquiries received since the original publication—more than for any other COMMENTARY article—reflect continued widespread demand for this work, especially for use in college courses. We are, therefore, announcing *The Dominican Revolt* as subject to the same quantity discount schedule offered for Commentary Reports (which are issued primarily for text use by college students and members of discussion groups).

IMPORTANT

Orders for twenty-five or more copies merit a 20% discount.



THE DOMINICAN REVOLT
by Theodore Draper
$2.50
Hard Cover **$5.50**
(plus tax where applicable)

order copies now from
Commentary
165 East 56 Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

Payment is enclosed for _____ copies of *The Dominican Revolt.*

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oxford University Press

The Prevention of Drinking Problems

ALCOHOL CONTROL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Rupert Wilkinson

"It is a definitive book that every perplexed middle-aged parent with teen-age children should read, mark, and inwardly digest."—The Reverend DAVID A. WORKS, Executive Vice President, North Conway Institute, Boston. "Unusual and provocative . . . Wilkinson has rendered a real service to a problem field."— SELDEN D. BACON, Director, Center of Alcohol Studies, Rutgers University $10.00

Patterns of Dominance

Philip Mason

The first Director of the Institute of Race Relations, London, sketches those stages of human development in which inequality was the condition of progress and rulers justified their domination by myths of divine origin or natural superiority. In the second part he examines forms of dominance in a wide variety of societies from ancient times to the present. *(For the Institute of Race Relations.)* $11.50

Democracy in Mexico

Pablo Gonzalez Casanova

Translated by DANIELLE SALTI; *foreword by* IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ. "I am delighted that Gonzalez Casanova's book will at last be available in English. It combines the presentation of key statistical facts with a kind of theoretical analysis which English-reading students will greatly appreciate." — HENRY A. LANDSBERGER, University of North Carolina $7.95

Hattusha

THE CAPITAL OF THE HITTITES

Kurt Bittel

"No better doorway is there to the fascinating history of the capital and center of the Hittite empire than this." — JAMES B. PRITCHARD, University of Pennsylvania. "A picture both trustworthy and vivid of a remarkable people . . . For many to whom the Hittites have been only an exotic name, Professor Bittel brings to life these people, their kings and their capital city."— HOMER A. THOMPSON, The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. *40 halftones, 40 plans and maps.* $10.00

The Art of the American Folk Preacher

Bruce A. Rosenberg

"It is a fine piece of work. . . . He keeps the background of theory in the oral formulaic techniques of Old English and Homeric Greek always before us, and wisely differentiates the aesthetic standards for judging each tradition. This is an important study, with seminal implications for literary criticism, folklore, religion, 'black studies,' and even rock music."— DONALD K. FRY, State University of New York, Stonybrook $8.50

The Art of Appreciation

Harold Osborne

The General Editor of the APPRECIATION OF THE ARTS series provides a firm basis of understanding for the practical skills of art appreciation. He treats appreciation primarily as a form of percipience; as the enrichment of our capacity for awareness. Various theories about the nature of aesthetic experience are discussed and an assessment is given of the contribution to appreciation made by historical, sociological, and technical information. *20 plates. Cloth,* $8.50. *Paper,* $4.95

Sculpture in Wood

Jack C. Rich

"It is the finest book on wood sculpture. I recommend it highly and most heartily!" — CHAIM GROSS. "The book contains a wealth of factual material and it is very important for the sculptor, the teacher, the art student and the art lover. . . . Mr. Rich presents the technical aspects very clearly in his important book which also encourages and inspires."— AARON J. GOODELMAN *Illustrated.* $9.95

The Modern Spirit

ESSAYS ON THE CONTINUITY OF NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE

Robert Langbaum

These ten recent essays reflect Professor Langbaum's continuing concern with what constitutes the modern in literature and life. They penetrate deeply into individual works, and show the growth of interest in questions of self, in myth, and in the tragicomic attitude that accompanies the mythical view of life.

Cloth, $6.50. *A Galaxy Book,* GB 320, *paper,* $1.95

At all bookstores

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

200 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Regional History

THE SOUTH AND THE NATION. By PAT WATTERS. *Pantheon. 390 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID DONALD

THOUGH SOUTHERN historical scholarship has gained in depth and precision during the past generation, no recent interpretation of the region has equaled W. J. Cash's *The Mind of the South.* The best Southern historians have been engaged in writing learned, but basically uninterpretive, studies like George Tindall's *The Emergence of the New South,* or in composing thoughtful, but necessarily brief and inconclusive, essays like C. Vann Woodward's *The Burden of Southern History* and David M. Potter's *The South and the Sectional Conflict.* For the full sweep of Southern history we still have to turn back to Cash's classic, even though it is now nearly thirty years out of date.

The South and the Nation, by Pat Watters, ought to have been a book that would supplement, if it did not replace, *The Mind of the South.* Resembling Cash in so many ways, Watters has the qualifications to write another major interpretation of the South. A native Southerner, he knows the people of his region and speaks their language. He has the true Southerner's amazing repertory of anecdotes, which he tells more skillfully than even Cash did. As reporter for the Atlanta *Journal* and, since 1963, information director for the Southern Regional Council, he has had unparalleled opportunities to observe every racial crisis in the South during the past decade and to interview the principal participants in most of them. A liberal, Watters writes of his section with a deep love for its virtues and with a sense of personal outrage over its barbarities.

Yet *The South and the Nation* is not a success. For many of its failings Watters is clearly to blame. He deliberately avoided "painstaking scholarly research in the cumulated findings of other people" in order to present his personal evaluation of the South, based upon "feeling and intuition more than on solid fact or certain knowledge." Cash did the same, and he wrote so well that he convinced readers that his feeling and his intuition were truth. Watters, on the other hand, is a poor, sometimes a slovenly, writer. His book is chaotic in structure and repetitious in argument.

Then, too, Watters writes from a very limited perspective—that of the liberal white Southerner living in Atlanta. Rarely does his range of vision extend beyond the state of Georgia. Cash, too, knew only a small part of the South, but he made us believe that what was true for the Carolina Piedmont held for the section as a whole. Watters, on the other hand, would have written a better book had he limited himself to the one state which he knows so well. His best pages are those evoking the sights and smells of the northwestern Georgia hill country, and his funniest, most devastating stories are those pricking the cultural pretensions of Atlanta.

Race as well as geography limits Watters's range. Like most other Southern whites, he has difficulty in writing about Negroes. By virtually ignoring the blacks, Cash could avoid analysis of how Negroes thought and felt, but a 1970 account of the South cannot present black men as passive participants in an all-white drama. Frankly admitting limited knowledge, Watters tries to describe the black community: "We will enter these beguiling, treacherous places as I force myself to act as a reporter, full of the knowledge that I am as ignorant of them as the freshly arrived Northern reporter is ignorant of the city South that I know so well." The intent is admirable, but the performance is flat. Sensitive to the nuances of white behavior, Watters views all blacks as alike—and as admirable. Even his language is stereotyped when he speaks of Negroes. Black leaders of the civil-rights movement, he says, showed the world "the best of the Southern heritage, its beauty of belief and great braveness," and he praises "the great and beautiful strengths of Negro culture."

BUT THE larger difficulties with *The South and the Nation* stem not so much from the author as from the subject. We no longer have a fixed vantage point from which to observe the South. Had Watters's study been written in the late 1950's, it could have had a simple theme: the South was becoming urbanized and industrialized; it was ending the segregation of schools and public facilities; it was conceding to black men the right to vote—in short, it was happily approaching the national norm. The spokesmen of change and progress were men like Martin Luther King, Jr., the young leaders of SNCC, and the few Southern white liberals who supported racial justice. Struggling against the tide of history were the bad men of the South, like "Bull" Connor of Birmingham, or Sheriff Jim Clark of Selma.

Looking back from 1970, it is clear that the pattern of events during the last two decades was far more complex and ironical. Watters shows how urbanization, far from bringing happiness and prosperity, has transformed Southerners into a "grim and grey people," living in a cultural wasteland. The end of *de jure* segregation of schools has promoted seg-

---

DAVID DONALD, *who is currently with the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Stanford, reviewed the Arno Press series,* The American Negro: His History and Literature, *in our April issue.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New Paperbacks from Schocken

Just Published

The Great Wall of China
Stories and Reflections
FRANZ KAFKA
Translated by Willa and Edwin Muir
paper $2.25/hardcover $5.00

Benya Krik, the Gangster
And Other Stories
ISAAC BABEL
Edited by Avrahm Yarmolinsky
paper $1.75/hardcover $4.50

Medical History of Contraception
NORMAN E. HIMES
Foreword by Robert L. Dickinson, M.D.
New Preface by Christopher Tietze, M.D., The Population Council
paper $3.45

Society Without the Father
A Contribution to Social Psychology
ALEXANDER MITSCHERLICH
paper $2.95

The History of the Incas
ALFRED MÉTRAUX
With 79 illustrations
paper $2.45

Imagination and the Growth of Science
A. M. TAYLOR
paper $1.75

Art and the Industrial Revolution
F. D. KLINGENDER
Edited and Revised by Arthur Elton
With 125 illustrations
paper $5.95

from your bookseller or
SCHOCKEN BOOKS
67 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y.10016

regated housing patterns and the consequent *de facto* school segregation already prevalent throughout the rest of the country. Registration of Negro voters and the election of a handful of black officials resulted in the reduction of the political power of Southern Negroes. We cannot even have the satisfaction of discovering behind these developments the malign influence of "villains whose overthrow will assure the end of evils." Instead, the responsibility was diffused among "the planters, the power structures of small cities and large, those possessive old men whose ugliness in a crisis reflected the anger and dismay and panic they felt at seeing their prized possession tampered with, the cotton mill owners, the faltering labor leaders, the ineffective liberals, the corrupt Negro leaders, the emasculated educational elite, the very policeman whose presence makes us shudder and say, 'I hate cops.'"

What has happened, in short, is that the South has become more and more like the rest of the nation. At the same time, the country as a whole is becoming increasingly Southern—most conspicuously in the now universally acknowledged racism of American society. The strength of Watters's book lies in his realization that he is describing a section that is about to disappear, but it is hard to write a good book about "the South and the Nation" when there is so little that remains distinctive.

Lore & Learning

THE BRITISH FOLKLORISTS: A HISTORY. By RICHARD M. DORSON. *University of Chicago Press. 518 pp. $17.95.*

PEASANT CUSTOMS AND SAVAGE MYTHS, 2 volumes. Edited by RICHARD M. DORSON. *University of Chicago Press. 751 pp. $22.00.*

Reviewed by ROBERT ACKERMAN

THERE ARE many anthropologists at work today but few folklorists. With the exception of the efforts of a few American academicians, folklore seems to have run its course so far as intellectual or cultural pretensions are concerned, and the pursuit is now back in the hands of the amateur enthusiasts, where it all began in England three centuries ago. Precisely because the study of folklore has flourished and declined (it was yet another casualty of the First World War), it is now possible to render a retrospective judgment on its activities and accomplishments. Richard Dorson, professor of history and folklore and director of the Folklore Institute at Indiana University, and one of the few scholars with the requisite overall knowledge of the field, has set himself this task. His effort, the first comprehensive history of British folklore ever written, is crammed with information that will be useful to anyone interested in 19th-century intellectual history, particularly the origins of anthropology in England; in the final analysis, however, it falls short of the mark.

Like Hercules, folklore has always found its strength in its contact with the earth, that is, with the "lore" that its workers have turned up; perhaps because of this naturally empirical cast, it has always depended upon other disciplines for its key metaphors (e.g., evolution, "survivals") and general theoretical formulations. One would think, then, that any account of folklore's rise and fall would necessarily touch on many interesting questions in modern intellectual and social history, for folklore has been deeply involved in the formulation of many key ideas, such as the "folk" (obviously), the primitive, social evolution, and the origins and nature of myth and religion. Unfortunately, Professor Dorson, perhaps out of professional piety, has elected to write a collective biography—note the title—of his specialty and not a critical history. This is not to say that he abstains from passing judgment on the men and work he discusses, but the biographical method he employs—although doubtless easing the task of ordering the masses of material—has acted to swamp many of the most interesting questions in a welter of rela-

ROBERT ACKERMAN *reviewed Joseph Campbell's* Flight of the Wild Gander *in our issue of December 1969.*

ARCHIVE COPY
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tively unimportant personalities and details. Moreover, as a result of the chronological scheme, many important controversies become fragmented, with bits and pieces scattered throughout the successive biographies of the eminent folklorists, necessitating a certain amount of repetition to remind the reader of the part played by some other scholar already mentioned.

A MORE serious lapse is Professor Dorson's failure to consider folklore as part of the larger cultural history of the modern world. Instead, he has generally been content to focus on the vicissitudes of folklore itself, treating them as if they were mostly independent of broader movements; the result is that only occasionally has he concerned himself with setting folklore in the cultural context that gave it its meaning and *raison d'être*.

An example: the word "folklore" was coined in 1846 by an English antiquary named William John Thoms to cover the large and otherwise miscellaneous group of ceremonies, customs, stories, proverbs, "superstitions," etc., that made up the fabric of the culture of the British lower classes. The idea of folklore, as echoed in the term itself, is thus deeply and problematically implicated in class relationships in mid-Victorian England: "they" are the folk, and "we" (middle-class scholars) study how they live at least in part because their lives, though lacking in amenities, seem somehow to be richer and more flavorful than our own. One is immediately reminded of Disraeli's famous remark, made in 1845, only the year before Thoms's coinage, that two separate nations—the rich and the poor—mutually ignorant of one another, were inhabiting the one England. Not only were the upper classes oppressing the nether orders economically but they were studying them too (the analogy to the colonial situation of poor blacks in America, with certain whites becoming experts on black "life styles," might be noted in passing). One may perhaps see the folklorists all unconsciously acting as scouts in the van of the main army of journalists and sociologists that were soon to arrive and begin the full-scale investigation of the poor that obsessed late-Victorian England. I do not mean to imply that the factory system and Chartism are the keys to the discussion of folklore in the 1840's, but certainly the particular context enriches any such examination. Professor Dorson is simply oblivious to the ideological content that his subject might possess.

Another example: in the most obvious sense the study of folklore could not have mushroomed to the extent that it did in the last third of the 19th century had conditions not been propitious. I refer first to the fact that post-Darwinian England was passing through a major spiritual crisis, and that people were anxiously seeking information or attitudes that could help them understand religion and its proper place in life. Folklore, or the folkloristic study of "primitive" religion, it was believed, could shed some light on the subject; as a result, even quite technical discussions between folklorists enjoyed substantial audiences. For example, Andrew Lang and Max Müller carried on a battle that lasted *twenty-five years* over the question of whether mythology was best understood philologically or anthropologically. Their polemic was conducted in general (not scholarly) magazines, and their frequent books were brought out by commercial publishers who could count on vigorous sales. Folklore mattered then as never again.

Another factor that propelled the comparative study of primitive religion by folklorists was the great imperial push by Britain and the other European powers in the second half of the century. Much of the data analyzed by the scholars back home came from traders and missionaries who followed the flag to the ends of the earth and then settled down, learned the native language, and proceeded to send back detailed (albeit often biased) reports. Most of the late-Victorian folklorists, believing as they did that the human mind was subject to the immutable laws of evolution, used these reports to unravel the mysteries of the "savage mind." It was therefore a fortunate happenstance, to say the least, for the

New Paperbacks from Schocken

Just Published

The Black Jews of Harlem
Negro Nationalism and the Dilemmas of Negro Leadership
HOWARD M. BROTZ
With 12 illustrations
paper $1.75/hardcover $5.00

The Walls Came Tumbling Down
Autobiography of a Co-founder of the NAACP
MARY WHITE OVINGTON
New Introduction by Charles Flint Kellogg
paper $2.45

Modern Hebrew Literature
From the Enlightenment to the Birth of the State of Israel: Trends and Values
SIMON HALKIN
paper $2.25/hardcover $6.00

Understanding Genesis
The Heritage of Biblical Israel
NAHUM M. SARNA
paper $2.45

The Genius of Paul
A Study in History
SAMUEL SANDMEL
paper $2.45/hardcover $6.50

Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Culture, Science, and Religion
JAMES LUTHER ADAMS
paper $2.95

Millennial Dreams in Action
Studies in Revolutionary Religious Movements
Edited by Sylvia L. Thrupp
paper $2.45

from your bookseller or
SCHOCKEN BOOKS
67 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y.10016

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Colonial Office to find the writings of these folklorists ready to hand when it became necessary to train young District Officers; by the end of the century Whitehall was giving its men cram courses in anthropology before they went out to shoulder the white man's burden.

LEST I seem to be implying that the only satisfactory approach to the study of the history of folklore (or of any social science) is from an ideological point of view, let me hasten to note at least one important way in which Professor Dorson's book is superior to the several histories of anthropology with which I am familiar. The tendency of scientists who attempt histories of their own disciplines is inherently Whiggish. That is, because scientists as a rule value work in their fields by the standard of its usefulness in solving problems—in short, by what might be called its operational "truth content"—they tend when writing history to assess the contributions of past workers by how closely they came to what is now accepted as scientific doctrine. The result is that the history of science in the hands of such writers tends to look like a straight highway that leads inexorably from the past up to the present (and the "truth"), and from which meander innumerable paths that go nowhere. These dead ends are, of course, "errors." Thus it is difficult to find in a history of chemistry a discussion of the "phlogiston" hypothesis that is anything but condescending or derisive. Rarely is an attempt made by such historians to feel their way into the minds of the proponents of phlogiston and figure out what the latter thought they were doing and why, and what light that information might shed on the real nature of scientific discovery. The phlogiston people were wrong and Lavoisier was right; that's all you need to know.

As anthropology, along with the other social sciences, has striven in the 20th century for the recognition and status accorded a science, its historians too have not been immune from this positivist attitude. It is therefore hard to find a sympathetic word for the likes of Andrew Lang except that he suppressed error in the form of Max Müller, or even more for Sir James Frazer, whose brand of naive, rationalistic, belletristic evolutionism is anathema to today's anthropologists. Anyone unlucky enough to have lived in the prefunctionalist, pre-Malinowskian *Urzeit* deserves the outer darkness to which history has consigned him. Here Professor Dorson's inclusiveness and lack of ideological partisanship are clearly advantages, for he is at his best in explaining and analyzing, in their own terms, and without deprecating, the complicated controversies that raged so fiercely and protractedly among folklorists. To any future historian of the social sciences, so long as he is not a deep-dyed positivist, *The British Folklorists* will be absolutely necessary, if not entirely sufficient, for writing his introductory chapters. This future historian might also find it handy, although by no means necessary in view of Professor Dorson's full bibliographies, to have by his side the two companion volumes of extracts from source documents called *Peasant Customs and Savage Myths* that Professor Dorson has also edited and that are designed to be read along with *The British Folklorists.*

Psychoanalytic Radicals

THE FREUDIAN LEFT. By PAUL ROBINSON. *Harper & Row. 252 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by MARTIN PERETZ

PSYCHOANALYSIS, after years of bitter struggle, is by now securely established as part of the received mode of Western thought, and it does not appear likely that anything will unseat it in the foreseeable future. Indeed, the impact of psychoanalysis will probably be diminished only by the extent to which the movement becomes vulgarized as it is more widely diffused —a process that has of course been taking place for some time now. In any event, this much is certain: psychoanalysis has been most fortunate in its chroniclers. To begin with, there is Ernest Jones's towering effort, the exhaustive, if somewhat hagiographic, trilogy on the founder of the movement; moreover, some of the original adepts have lived to tell their own stories. In David Rapaport, psychoanalysis found both a vaulting theorist and a skillful reporter; and, with the Freud centenary in 1956 came a series of interpretive essays, preeminently those by Erik Erikson and Lionel Trilling. Nor has the Viennese science been slighted by the more theoretically inclined intellectual and cultural historians. Here the studies of H. Stuart Hughes and Philip Rieff come immediately to mind.

The fact that psychoanalysis had evolved into something of an orthodoxy is no doubt what provoked these particular writings. But it would be unfair to fault scholars for fixing their interest on the mainstream and ignoring the side-currents. That is the way history is always written, including the history of ideas. But now and then the *Zeitgeist*, in all its imperious caprice, would seem to demand the redress of intellectual neglect. Thus amends, literary ones at any rate, have been made to such of history's victims, left behind by a triumphant progress, as George Rude's "crowds," E. J. Hobsbawm's "bandits," E. P. Thompson's "defeated workers," Stephan Thernstrom's "downwardly mobile Americans," even Robert Conquest's "purged Bolsheviks." Rising also from the disdainful footnotes of the authorized texts loom the cranky visionaries of intellectual history, now revealed as monumental presences. (Frank Manuel's redeeming portrait of Fourier is unrivalled in this regard.)

PAUL ROBINSON'S *The Freudian Left* seeks to effect just such an act of redemption for the dissidents who departed from Freudian orthodoxy. In the case of the three psychoanalytic "radicals" who form the subject of this book—Wilhelm Reich, Geza Roheim, Herbert Marcuse—it is hardly a matter of the resurrection of the forgotten but rather of rescue from a web of misconceptions. Roheim, to be sure, has not been a popular or

MARTIN PERETZ *teaches in the department of social studies at Harvard.*

LICENSED TO JSTOR
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

standing reference point, but even he, through the mediation of Norman O. Brown, has found his latter-day admirers; and Reich and Marcuse have most decisively not suffered from want of notice. Indeed, any suffering they have endured has come from an excess of misguided attention on the part of both detractors and worshipers. Among the conventional Freudians, Reich and Marcuse call up a telling mixture of boredom and alarm; having been made objects of secular adoration by the cultists, they undergo at the hands of certain of their enthusiasts a worse fate: egregious distortion. The frequent result is that critics respond not to the subjects as they really are, but to their shadow images as refracted through the mass media and the effusions of half-baked disciples. Marcuse particularly has been on the receiving end of such treatment; just about everyone seems to feel competent to issue pronouncements against him, from the most illiterate editorialist to the Pope.*

At the very least, then, *The Freudian Left* serves the purpose of timely instruction, as well as a corrective to the prevailing distortions. In an age described as one of "moral interregnum"—Nietzsche's apt phrase—Robinson has provided an excellent abstraction of the work of three men who speak most directly to and of the mood of transition. In so doing, he has also restored the integrity and austerity of their viewpoints by clearing away the romantic underbrush that has accreted to their thought. This is no insignificant task. Where politics and economics are joined with sex in one radical theory—as in the thought of Reich, Roheim, and Marcuse—the abuses associated with too eager acceptance are only too likely to proliferate.

In the current climate of opinion,

* To set the record straight, however, Alasdair MacIntyre, David Spitz, and Allen Graubard have written critically about Marcuse, without engaging in the fatuous totalitarianizing of various intellectual commentators. See also my essay, "Herbert Marcuse: Beyond Technological Rationality," in *Yale Review* (Summer 1968); and "The Political Thought of Herbert Marcuse," by George Kateb, in COMMENTARY (January 1970).

Stanford Books on World Communism

Change in Communist Systems

EDITED BY CHALMERS JOHNSON. Twelve specialists analyze the problems of social, political, and economic change in the 14 existent Communist systems using contemporary models of social science theory, especially the "mobilization system" model. $8.95

Political Terror in Communist Systems

ALEXANDER DALLIN AND GEORGE W. BRESLAUER. In assessing the place of political terror in Communist systems, the authors identify its range of function, explore variations in its use, and relate terror to the dynamics of developing political systems. $5.95

The Revolutionary Internationals, 1864–1943

EDITED BY MILORAD M. DRACHKOVITCH. Contributions by Milorad M. Drachkovitch, Jacques Freymond, Carl Landauer, Branko Lazitch, Miklós Molnár, Boris I. Nicolaevsky, Gerhart Niemeyer, Max Nomad, and Stefan T. Possony. Cloth, $6.95; paper, $2.95

Marxism in the Modern World

EDITED BY MILORAD M. DRACHKOVITCH. Contributions by Raymond Aron, Bertram D. Wolfe, Boris Souvarine, Merle Fainsod, Adam B. Ulam, Arthur A. Cohen, Theodore Draper, and Richard Lowenthal. Introduction by Milorad M. Drachkovitch. Cloth, $7.50; paper, $2.95

The Forming of the Communist International

JAMES W. HULSE. "Mr. Hulse has done an excellent job."—The Times Literary Supplement. "The definitive work on the subject."—Library Journal. "Rich in facts and interpretation. . . . An important piece of scholarship."—The Russian Review. $7.50

The Transformation of Political Culture in Cuba

RICHARD R. FAGEN. "As specific and cogent an examination as has been made of the mass mobilization programs of the Cuban Revolution."—New York Times Book Review. Stanford Studies in Comparative Politics. Illustrated. $8.50

Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism

JOHN M. CAMMETT. "Rarely has the relationship between a man's political thought and action been explored so specifically and shrewdly as is Gramsci's in this indispensable book."—Studies on the Left. Cloth, $8.50; paper, $2.95

French Communism in the Making, 1914–1924

ROBERT WOHL. "A major scholarly contribution. . . . This book is a remarkable work of research and interpretive synthesis."—The Annals. "Wohl's account . . . bids fair to remain the authoritative study."—International Journal. Illustrated. $12.50

The Japanese Communist Party, 1922–1945

GEORGE BECKMAN AND GENJI OKUBO. "A complete factual description of the domestic party and its international relations."—Journal of Asian Studies. "Essential reading. . . . The basic history of Communism in Japan."—The Annals. $12.50

The Chinese Communist Movement

A Report of the United States War Department, July 1945. EDITED BY LYMAN P. VAN SLYKE. "A document of considerable historic value. . . . One of the most detailed accounts available in English of the Kuomintang-Communist struggle."—Journal of Asian Studies. Cloth, $7.50; paper, $2.95

Moscow and Chinese Communists

ROBERT C. NORTH. "One of the big stories of the modern age, and Mr. North brings to it both a clear and flexible narrative style and a wealth of careful research."—The New Republic. "Scholarship of the first order."—New York Times Book Review. Cloth, $8.50; paper, $2.95

Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 1927–1935

JOHN E. RUE. "Extraordinarily interesting."—The New York Times. "The first investigation in depth of this crucial period and constitutes therefore a signal contribution to the scholarly study of the history of the C. C. P."—International Journal. $10.00

Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power

The Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1937–1945. CHALMERS A. JOHNSON. "A path-breaking work in comparative history."—John K. Fairbank. "One of the standard works on the rise of communism in China."—The American Political Science Review. Cloth, $7.50; paper, $2.95

Stanford University Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Foundations of British Policy in the Arab World

The Cairo Conference of 1921

AARON S. KLIEMAN

Drawing on previously unavailable documents of the British government as well as private papers and memoirs, Mr. Klieman uses the Cairo Conference as the focal point for a detailed study of Britain's involvement in Middle Eastern affairs. He concludes that many of the contemporary problems of the Middle East orginated in this earlier, decisive period. $10.00

THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS

Baltimore, Maryland 21218

Publishers of
The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower

ANTIQUE MAP OF THE HOLY LAND

A facsimile of the first map of the Holy Land printed in Hebrew

Limited edition _____

Rich bistre-tone on imported handmade Apta paper. Size: 20 inches x 26 inches.

Exclusive with The Commentary Library.

Only $12.95

The Commentary Library
165 East 56th Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

Please send me_____copies of THE ANTIQUE MAP OF THE HOLY LAND at $12.95 each. My check for $_____is attached. If I am not completely satisfied I may return the purchase for a prompt refund.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____State_____Zip_____

which is for many young people especially a climate of facile radicalism, it must be terribly reassuring to believe that Marx plus Freud (according, of course, to some chosen congenial reading) equals, as if by formula, the truth. By the same token, however, it is easy to dismiss out of hand the anxieties and sensibilities which push people to such spurious unities. Robinson, to his credit, avoids this trap; nor does he fall prey to the no less fashionable lure of academic cynicism. Throughout his scrupulous exegesis one is constantly aware of a concern with the most germane contemporary questions. Though far more subtle and sophisticated, the mental set of this volume, in fact, is not unlike those useful chapbooks of the 30's, "What is living or dead in the thought of. . . ." Moreover, this approach is fully in accord with the moral intentions of the three men under consideration.

Each of them was, or is, in his own way, a chiliast, and the temperament of each was nourished by an elemental hostility to sexual and other forms of oppression. Being European rather than American, and therefore schooled in holistic traditions, each was led to see human suffering and deprivation not as separate experiences, but as aspects and expressions of all-subsuming rules. If psychological categories more than others define the quality of life, they do not do so without regard to the structures of institutions. And neither in Marcuse nor in Reich, nor even quite in the less explicitly political Roheim, are these institutions simply derivative from pre-existent psychic and familial patterns. Since the politics of *angst* and anomie, of personal aimlessness and sexual rebellion are now waged in tandem with the politics of race and class and international solidarity, it is illuminating to be able to go back to the pioneers who first drove in their stakes at the crossroads and who also, to the taunts of onlookers, indicated possible paths of liberation along personal as well as collective lines.

IF NOTHING ELSE, this book should reawaken interest in Geza Roheim, whose anthropological investigations, carried on in the light of Freudian theory, doggedly insist upon the psychic unity of mankind and stand apart from the vogue of cultural relativism. His views are at odds with the functionalist tradition and its methodological inhibitions, through which that tradition cavalierly circumscribes the possibilities of social science. Robinson's discussion of this subject shows him to be an outstanding adept of interdisciplinary understanding; briefly, but cogently, he elucidates one of the most vexing and elusive problems of social theory. Having stated his case so compellingly, Robinson is then able to reconstruct what was sensible in Roheim's efforts to validate *Totem and Taboo* and to prove the historicity of myth. It was precisely Roheim's fidelity to the bleakest implications of Freudian thought that forced him out of the acceptable mainstream. Too orthodox in some ways, too daring in others, virtually without impact on the discipline he hoped to reshape, Roheim appears at last to have produced heirs.

Reich, we know, has always had them, though we know little of what he would have made of the exultants who use his name. Robinson's careful treatment of Reich's sex-economic calculus will help readers to distinguish between what the master really believed and the debauch which some latter-day Reichians proclaim to be "liberation." Reich was not a prophet of the polymorphous perverse, but, rather like Marcuse, saw sexual liberation basically in heterosexual and genital terms. Moreover, while he tried to make a career within both the Socialist and Communist movements, toward the end of his life he shared the anti-Communists' phobias of the American 50's. Just when the scientific establishment and the legal authorities embarked on their last and successful attempt to put him away, he persisted in believing that it was the Left which was tormenting him, and that President Eisenhower would save him. (Reich's former wife, Ilse Ollendorf Reich, has discussed this aspect of his life in her recent biography* somewhat more fully

* *Wilhelm Reich: A Personal Biography*, St. Martin's Press, 224 pp. $5.95.

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than does Robinson.) This phase of Reich's later years is not without importance in assessing his work on orgone energy, but Robinson has demonstrated that the core of Reich's thought predates this unhappy time and stands independently of his phantasmagoric theories which sought to fuse medicine, religion, and physics.

The death instinct, rejected by Reich, is at the very center of the writings of Herbert Marcuse—a fact which helps to explain the pessimism which intrudes almost dialectically and persistently throughout his efforts to provide a generation of idealistic malcontents with guidelines for action. In the final analysis, Robinson's portrait of Marcuse places him less in the activist tradition than in the line of grand philosophy, of German high culture, and idealism. Robinson has rightly stressed the continuity in Marcuse's work, from his earliest studies at Frankfurt on the family to his current analyses of advanced capitalist society. Reading this chapter, one is made forcefully aware that Robinson has given us the essential Marcuse—a service he performs with equal distinction for Roheim and Reich.

Patterns of Discontent

WHY MEN REBEL. By TED ROBERT GURR. *Princeton University Press. 421 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by JAMES R. ADAMS

SOME OF THE most persuasive arguments for the policy now called "benign neglect" are to be found in this book, although that is probably coincidence and certainly not the intention of the author. Daniel P. Moynihan's memorandum, it will be recalled, was not a complacent document; the "neglect" he called for was a period of restraint in rhetoric, of cooling of public passion, to avoid the violence that always complicates the attainment of major social reform. His recommendation fits quite well a Republican campaign statement that at first glance might appear sheer demagogy: the ghetto riots, said Republicans, were fueled by the disappointments generated by the failure to keep impossible promises.

There is, indeed, a case to be made for this view, a case elaborated and qualified in Ted Robert Gurr's book. The argument begins, like most theories of revolution, with the phenomenon which Gurr calls "Relative Deprivation," and which results directly in the phenomenon known to us all as "discontent." People become discontented, according to this reading, not because they are living in misery, but because their expectations for their conditions of life exceed their present possibilities. Dissatisfaction, that is, comes not from one's objective material deprivations, but from one's attitude toward them—an old observation which American political science has lately rediscovered and made much of. To be precise, Gurr outlines several patterns of discontent: people, in one case, can no longer obtain goods to which they had become accustomed; in another, they have been led to expect, as their due, improvements which are unobtainable.

THE MORE intensely people are discontented, postulates Gurr, the more likely they are to resort to violence. The immediate reaction, in its basic form, is amorphous, unfocused "collective violence," examples of which were the Negro riots in innumerable American cities over the past six years. If one believes that such violence can have grave consequences for the republic, and Gurr argues that violence can be habit-forming, then one should welcome all reasonable public policies which reduce to any extent the possibility of its recurrence. One such policy, suggested by this argument, is simply to avoid raising expectations to a level impossible of satisfaction. It should immediately be stressed that neither Gurr nor Moynihan thinks this course of action will solve the basic problems behind the ghetto riots. It is, however, a sensible preliminary to reduce the likelihood of violence, especially if quiet progress can be and is being made on other fronts. Some of the

JAMES R. ADAMS, *a new contributor, is currently doing graduate work in political science in Paris.*

The Education of Kate Haracz
An explosive view of America's $25 billion investment in higher education

"M. didn't even bother showing until the third week of classes and then when he did, I wished he hadn't bothered. He's one of the New Profs, the ones who come on casual and try to play it cool, knock the System, and in other ways try to con us into thinking that they're one of us, the great unwashed disaffected student body.

From "The Diary of Kate Haracz"
Change Magazine

Kate Haracz is a 21-year-old Michigan State junior, whose mind bending 11,000-word diary is likely to upset just about every notion you've ever had about college. It appears in the current issue of **Change** Magazine, America's exciting new bimonthly magazine on higher education and society.

You can now take advantage of a unique opportunity to receive a half-year, no-risk trial subscription to one of America's unique new magazines...for a mere $2.50, rather than the regular $8.50 full-year subscription price. You can begin with Kate Haracz's memorable account, so long as the supply lasts. All you pay is $2.50. If you decide to cancel after reading Kate Haracz's moving document, a refund for the remaining copies will be automatically mailed. Either way, Kate Haracz's account of university life is yours.

SPECIAL OFFER

C
Change Magazine
59 E. 54th St.
New York, N.Y. 10022

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY ZIP CODE

☐ check enclosed. Send bonus issue. ☐ Special ½ yr. $ 2.50
☐ 1 yr. $ 8.50
☐ please bill ☐ 2 yrs. $15.00

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Eric Lindbloom

"Victor Perera is a real writer, and it's important to welcome him."
—Peter S. Beagle, San Francisco Chronicle

THE CONVERSION

A young Jewish student in modern Spain to study Cervantes struggles with the age-old problems of religious and parental obligations and psychosexual adjustments. Like his Sephardic forebears (and the indomitable Don Quixote), Stanley Bendana survives—in an ironic novel that enriches the mind as it gladdens the heart.

$5.95 at bookstores
Little, Brown

At the age of 17 she was fighting the Nazis in Poland —10 years later she was still fighting. This time in the Negev. She was indomitable. She was...

A Girl Called Judith Strick
by JUDITH STRICK DRIBBEN

"We follow her through incredible danger and suffering and heroism in the underground; in encounters with the Gestapo . . . in Auschwitz . . . in the fight for Israel's independence. . . . All these are not only stages of an extraordinary life, but the stages of the history of her people, from the terrible prelude to national revival in Israel."—GOLDA MEIR, *from the Foreword.*

$6.95 at all bookstores

Cowles Book Company, Inc.

John W. Gardner

"Keeper of the National Conscience"—STEWART L. UDALL

THE RECOVERY OF CONFIDENCE

"It has such an important message for the country that everybody interested in public affairs should read it."
— *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

At all bookstores, $5.00

Norton
55 Fifth Ave./N.Y. 10003

greatest and most enduring social changes in history have been brought about without publicity and almost without notice.

The primary intention of Gurr's book is not, however, to give advice. (He has already done that, as the director of a task force for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence.) His book presents instead a general theory of political violence, and points like the above must be extrapolated by readers from its postulates. Gurr states and argues sixty-five hypotheses and corollaries, some of which are genuine, if not altogether original, insights into the phenomenon of political violence. His reasoning is comprehensive and solid in an area where so much contemporary thought is sheer fantasy, and his book would deserve circulation outside the field of political science were it not for the fact that for anyone not driven by professional interests, it is almost impossible to read. This is a shame, because Gurr's basic argument is worthy of attention. It is both sophisticated and simple, and even its shortcomings are provocative. (I would direct the interested general reader to Gurr's less technical and better-written article in the volume he edited for the Violence Commission, a well-balanced anthology entitled *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives.* It is available from the U.S. Superintendent of Documents at $2.75, a saving of almost $10 over the Princeton volume.) I have already outlined Gurr's basic statements on the origin of discontent and its expression in "collective violence." The next important phase of his theory is the metamorphosis of this apolitical violence into politicized discontent. Gurr has developed an original and quite elegant categorization of political violence into three general forms: turmoil (such as rioting or strikes); conspiracy; and civil or internal war. Much of his theory elaborates the influences that cause politicized discontent to take one or another of these forms.

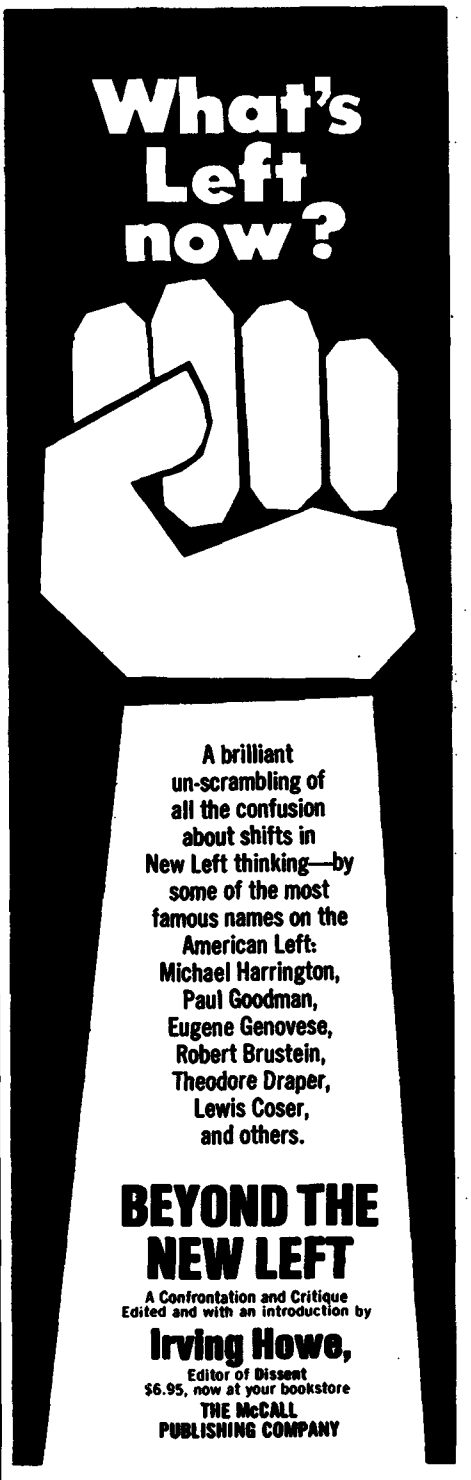
As AN example of Gurr's method of presentation and argument, let us look at his discussion of the Ameri-

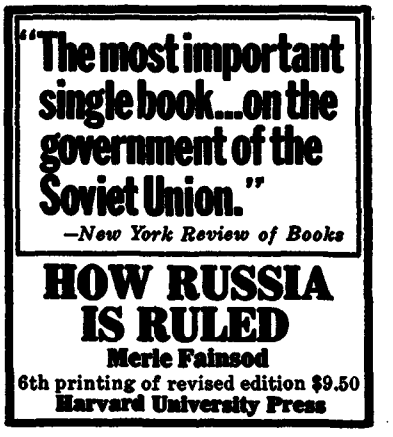
ARCHIVE.COMMENTARY.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can racial problem. In the early and mid-60's, Gurr writes, conditions of turmoil predominated within the black community; these were: intense discontent caused by economic and status deprivation, at its greatest in urban slums among the lower class; the lack of organizations committed to violent political opposition; and geographical concentration facilitating high but inconsistent police control. In the middle and late 60's, he continues, the pattern shifted toward the conditions of internal war: intensified discontent of the elite; partial failure of political channels, making the government a more direct focus of anger; and an inconsistent pattern of police response to the riots. But the structural conditions of internal war are still lacking: institutional and coercive control remain high and the new clandestine radical organizations are unlikely to reverse the balance of power. Consequently, Gurr concludes, black political violence will take the form of chronic turmoil and conspiracy, until, and unless, underlying discontents are resolved. Each of the above-mentioned factors receives elaboration in the rest of the book; unfortunately, Gurr rarely tries his hand at similar analyses of specific situations.

The presentation of these political factors complements and strengthens Gurr's use of psychological material, the other major innovation of his book. The psychological argument, his most basic and also most vulnerable, tries to explain the jump from "relative deprivation" to violence. When men can't get what they think are their just deserts, argues Gurr, they become frustrated. Gurr adopts from the large body of psychological literature on the "frustration-anger-aggression syndrome" the hypothesis that aggression (the product of anger) is the main response to frustration, and that "men who are frustrated have an innate disposition to do violence to its source in proportion to the intensity of their frustration." (In a gratuitous polemical flourish, he compares this principle, the driving force of his theory, with the law of gravity.) But although Gurr uses his psychology much more soundly than, say, Stanley Elkins does in *Slavery,* he encounters similar limitations. His citations, even by his own account, do not support his over-dogmatic conclusion; some studies report such other products of frustration as "submission," "dependence," and "apathy"—reactions which could lead to political deductions directly the opposite of Gurr's. Furthermore, although the literature cited by Gurr deals with animals, children, and New Guinea tribesmen, it rarely describes grown men in political circumstances. Anyone who tries to apply modern psychology directly to politics runs the serious risk of losing all perspective and clarity. It is greatly to Gurr's credit that he reintroduces the political perspective in the later stages of his theory, but one has the feeling that a chance was missed here to discuss a crucial political phenomenon—anger—as it ought to be discussed in the full context of political life.

EVEN MORE disappointing is Gurr's failure adequately to come to grips with the most politically important findings of this branch of psychology, findings which he duly presents in *Why Men Rebel.* Briefly, some psychological experimenters have discovered that their subjects react with less aggression than usual when faced with frustrations they think are reasonable or justifiable; as in the memorable scene in Truffaut's extraordinary movie *L'Enfant Sauvage,* the subjects bear witness to a crude but functioning sense of justice. This evidence reveals more than Gurr intends it to, and he overlooks its significance because of a blind spot, not only in his book, but in his profession. Gurr makes the comment one would expect from a "value-free" social scientist: "What is 'reasonable' or 'non-arbitrary' frustration is of course a function of social learning." Political science, which tries to study social phenomena as objectively as a biologist would dissect a shark, is embarrassed by words like "reasonable" and even "non-arbitrary." The question of justice is not easily elucidated by the scientific method, and so it is papered over by concepts like "socially learned


What's Left now?
A brilliant un-scrambling of all the confusion about shifts in New Left thinking—by some of the most famous names on the American Left: Michael Harrington, Paul Goodman, Eugene Genovese, Robert Brustein, Theodore Draper, Lewis Coser, and others.
BEYOND THE NEW LEFT
A Confrontation and Critique
Edited and with an introduction by
Irving Howe,
Editor of Dissent
$6.95, now at your bookstore
THE McCALL PUBLISHING COMPANY


"The most important single book...on the government of the Soviet Union."
—New York Review of Books
HOW RUSSIA IS RULED
Merle Fainsod
6th printing of revised edition $9.50
Harvard University Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

recently published

MAN AND GOD

Studies in Biblical Theology

By Eliezer Berkovits

An original work that analyzes some of the basic concepts of biblical theology and opens up new vistas for future research. Basing his research completely on the Hebrew original, the author derives biblical meaning exclusively from the function that a concept fulfills in the context in which it occurs. He has investigated every context in which a specific idea functions and thus brings the Bible in its entirety to bear on the elucidation of each individual passage.

377 pages *$12.50*

THE INTELLECTUAL LEGACY OF PAUL TILLICH

Edited by James R. Lyons

The essays in this volume all deal with the intellectual contributions of Paul Tillich, a scholar whose work symbolized the bridge between religion and modern culture. Contributors are John Herman Randall, Jr., Roger L. Shinn, Earl A. Loomis, M.D., and James R. Lyons.

117 pages *$3.95*

THE DETROIT RIOT OF 1967

By Hubert G. Locke

A frequent spokesman for the Detroit black community who was also the administrative assistant to the Detroit police commissioner at the time of the riot interprets the before, during, and after story of the 1967 riot. In addition, he offers his observations on the critical questions that confront contemporary urban America, the plight of black leadership, the impact and influence of militant perspectives. In one of the most important parts of this book, Rev. Locke comments on the problems of the police system and makes suggestions for recruiting and organizing a truly modern urban police department.

160 pages, illustrated *$6.50*

from your bookseller or from

Wayne State University Press
Detroit, Michigan 48202

normative systems." But Gurr, who deals with a more comprehensive subject than do most political scientists, has greater difficulty in evading this problem. It comes up very early, in his definition of relative deprivation as the discrepancy between the goods and conditions of life people think they can get and keep, and those "to which people think they are rightfully entitled." In other words, the basic cause of discontent is that people feel they are suffering injustice.

By putting aside the question of justice, Gurr limits and distorts his discussion of all the related problems, such as the question of legitimacy. The justice of a regime is the ultimate root of its legitimacy, although the historical and political ramifications are innumerable. It is in examining one latter-day offshoot of this problem that Gurr mentions the psychological findings I refer to above; he presents them for their bearing on one of his hypotheses: that the more people believe in the legitimacy of a regime, the less likely they are to believe in the rightness of political violence. The question of legitimacy, unhappily, remains for Gurr the question of measuring citizen support for a regime, as the question of the rightness of a revolution remains the question of measuring the extent or intensity of support for it. Gurr approaches the very relevant political question: When is violence actually justified? However, although he gets further than most, he ultimately refuses to cross the boundaries set by his profession, and asks only the political scientist's question: When do people think it is justified? In real life, however, the problem of justice cannot be evaded. We can see why it ought to be so important, not only for Gurr, but for all of us, if we refer to his report to the Commission on Violence:

> In the perfect social order, all acts judged legal would be regarded as legitimate by the community, all illegal acts would be illegitimate. No such clear-cut distinction holds in the United States so far as violence, force, and protest are concerned, nor has it ever. . . . Americans deplored the assassination of John F. Kennedy, yet years earlier many had applauded the abortive attempt on the life of Adolf Hitler.

At a time when many of our most vicious demagogues refuse to see the difference between Nazi Germany and the United States, the good of the republic demands that we approach the questions of justice and legitimacy—and violence—with a serious attempt to make clear-cut distinctions.

Bitter Comedy

VITAL PARTS. By THOMAS BERGER. *Richard W. Baron. 432 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by RICHARD SCHICKEL

IT IS MY sad conviction that Thomas Berger will never achieve the recognition he deserves. Of his five novels only *Little Big Man*, a mock epic about the American frontier, and his latest, *Vital Parts*, have been reviewed intelligently. And only the former, which has been reissued in paperback and is about to be released as a movie starring Dustin Hoffman, has gained an audience of something like the size to which its merits entitle it—and that, principally because it is the most cheerful, most subject to sentimental interpretation, and the least tensely wound of all his books. For these reasons it is also, ironically, the least characteristic of them.

Elsewhere, though often funny, Berger's work is almost never cheerful. And though occasionally compassionate, Berger is more often than not near-Olympian in his elegant and icy disdain for that arrangement of lies, cons, and put-ons by which we conspire to sustain what passes for civility in human conduct. Finally, his style is typically not as playful as it is in *Little Big Man*, which is written in careful parody of the comically stilted tone—half vernacular, half

RICHARD SCHICKEL *is working on a biography of D. W. Griffith. Mr. Schickel is the author of, among other works,* The World of Goya *and* The Disney Version.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

genteel-literary—common in the amateurishly composed (though often ghost-written) memoirs of our pioneers, a genre to which the novel pretends to belong. As a rule, Berger's prose is dense, tightly packed, and intensely formal, his sentences and paragraphs tend to be long and serpentine, and when he gives us a fragmentary sentence or a short paragraph it is a little event on the page, a form of super-punctuation.

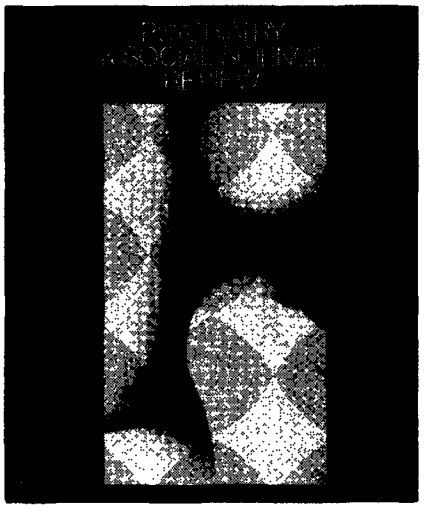
All of these characteristics combine to put the common reader off. Berger is hard going and he has yet to win the endorsement of the upper stratum of the literary community which has induced the public to buy—if not perhaps actually to read—works by such variously difficult writers as Nabokov and Bellow. For example, *Killing Time*, the novel that came immediately after *Little Big Man*, and which is certainly Berger's most daring work, was heedlessly received. Its deliberately flat, carefully objective account of a mass murderer was devoid of conventional psychological apologias; it also lacked the squishy humanism (or at least humanitarianism) that usually decorates fictions about madmen. What Berger did in *Killing Time* was to enter completely the mind of his protagonist, and to render the world entirely in terms of his rather special, but oddly persuasive, logic. Indeed, it was only in his choice of the form of action in which to express himself that the murderer differed at all from the other characters in the novel. The result, for the reader, is very chilling, much too chilling, certainly, to insure the book popularity of any kind. We like our black humor—to risk that imprecise but familiar term—to announce its blackness, its craziness, on every page, in order to remind us where we are and how we're supposed to respond. We also like works in this vein to reassure us, however subtly, that the aberrations they deal with are temporary, the result of some brief (and correctable) social or political maladjustment, often one that can be remedied by that vague nostrum, love. (I happen to admire, for instance, the work of Kurt Vonnegut, but there is no question he is an idealist, believing in the possibility of redemption through the power of pacifism, love, and the general spread of sweetness and light; there can also be no question that this view is what has made him the only contemporary American novelist widely popular with college kids.)

Most powerfully in *Killing Time*, but also in the Reinhart trilogy, of which *Vital Parts* is the concluding section, Berger will do no more than concede that men still yearn to connect with one another in harmony; but his vision refuses to allow the possibility that they can do so on any but a temporary and accidental basis. Mostly they use one another (often, to be sure, without acrimony) pretty much in the style of business firms making limited, mutually advantageous working agreements. In short, he accepts free enterprise, spiritual as well as economic, as the basis of our society, probably of Western civilization as well. He thinks it immutable—man being the fallen and greedy creature he is—and for all the difficulties it presents, the only viable basis on which to organize self and society. This is not calculated to win him the affection of the literary community, which has been, these many years, committed to quite another vision. Certainly its middlebrow fellow-travelers are not going to buy him, either in their minds or in the shops, in any great numbers.

I SUPPOSE one must concede that Carlo Reinhart, good-natured though he is, is an uncongenial type for a novelist to stake most of his career on. For Carlo, first encountered in *Crazy in Berlin* as a member of the occupying American army at the end of World War II, traced through a difficult readjustment to civilian life in *Reinhart in Love*, and now, in *Vital Parts*, picked up in early middle age trying to come to terms with a world as radically different from postwar America as that America was different from the depression decade that formed his sensibility, is a WASP of the middle-American sub-species. Worse, he has very little precedent in American literature. The Middle West that spawned him bears al-

FREE

a subscription to:
PSYCHIATRY &
SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW



Now you can receive the magazine that 45,000 professionals in the behavioral sciences enjoy every month. In it you'll find critical essays such as:

- The Coming of the Wasteland in Contemporary Psychotherapy
- Making Riots Mandatory
- The Origins of Schizophrenia
- On Erikson and Gandhi
- Costs of Overcriminalization
- Reich Reexamined

The prominent contributors include: Robert Lifton • Amitai Etzioni • Nathaniel Ross • Leopold Bellak • Donald Kaplan • Edward Glover

With the Review you'll automatically become a member of the Psychiatry and Social Science Book Club, a highly regarded professional club—45,000 members receive more than 80 new book offerings every year.

You need buy no books to remain a member; your only obligation is to return a card if you do not want the main selection.

Psychiatry and Social Science Book Club
59 Fourth Avenue, N.Y.C. 10003

☐ Yes, enroll me as a member of the Book Club and send me Psychiatry & Social Science Review FREE each month. I will receive full descriptions of main and alternate selections along with a card for ordering alternate selections or no book at all. COM770

Name_____

Street_____

_____ Zip_____

Profession_____

ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

most no resemblance to that of Sinclair Lewis, which was small-town and westerly, while Carlo is, apparently, a Cincinnatian. Sherwood Anderson's Ohio midland was also small-town dominated and, of course, a darker, bloodier ground than anything Carlo knows. Nor can one compare Berger's work with that of another great contemporary interpreter of the Middle West, Evan Connell, since Connell is a quieter, more realistic ironist and, also, one who deals in a more established middle-class world than does Berger, whose people remain hard-chargers, "bidnessmen" as they formerly mispronounced their antic calling. Indeed, it is foolish to pursue comparisons in considering Berger's work, the horrid example of the man from the *Times*, who fatuously placed *Little Big Man* in a category with *The Big Sky* and *The Ox-Bow Incident*, being recalled for us on the very jacket of *Vital Parts*.

The main thing about Carlo is that he is a loner—lacking, as all of us now do, a prairie fastness in which to lose himself. He liked the army perhaps better than any other institution he ever encountered, principally because, ordered about in minor matters, he had plenty of time to devote, as readers of *Crazy in Berlin* will remember, to really important, self-defining thoughts and activities. Back home, in the trilogy's second volume, he was a victim of, as much as anything, cultural lag. In effect apprenticed to a realtor, hoping to learn the routine crookedness of that trade, he had difficulty grasping what his mentor, Claude Humboldt, had discovered: that selling houses made out of green lumber or lacking adequate basements was no longer a sufficient guarantee of financial success. The big money in newly prosperous America involved municipal corruption on a large scale (the trick now was to place manhole covers in the streets and neglect to put sewer pipes underneath). Overmatched, Reinhart failed. Reverting to his proper level, one-man entrepreneurship, he subsequently failed in a service station (the new superhighway bypassed him) and in TV repair (he was unprepared for color).

As we fade in on Reinhart in *Vital Parts* he is unemployed, has learned the proper lesson from his experiences (that the small businessman and, by extension, the individual, is at the mercy of forces beyond his control and that one must join up in order to make out), but is emotionally resisting that knowledge. His collegiate son is experimenting in revolutionary attitudes, with pure communism, or communality, as a goal, and the doughty Reinhart argues with him in his own mind: "Who had not dabbled in that vision as a beardless stripling? And then grew up, at least in America, to see the mess made by the Post Office, the Army, and other public agencies. Reinhart would rather buy a house from a crooked finagler like . . . Claude Humboldt than be issued one by some prick of a bureaucrat."

CLINGING, as he himself knows, to ideas that have outlived their time, has cost Reinhart much. His son, predictably, hates him. His wife has unmanned him; refusing to share her bed with him, and leaving him at home to cook and wash, she now supports the family by managing a mod boutique. He is left only with his fat, dull daughter's love. In a way, for a man like Reinhart, that is worse than no love at all, for she is, alas, good, and "the really good are . . . even more frightening than the really evil, for we cannot punish them."

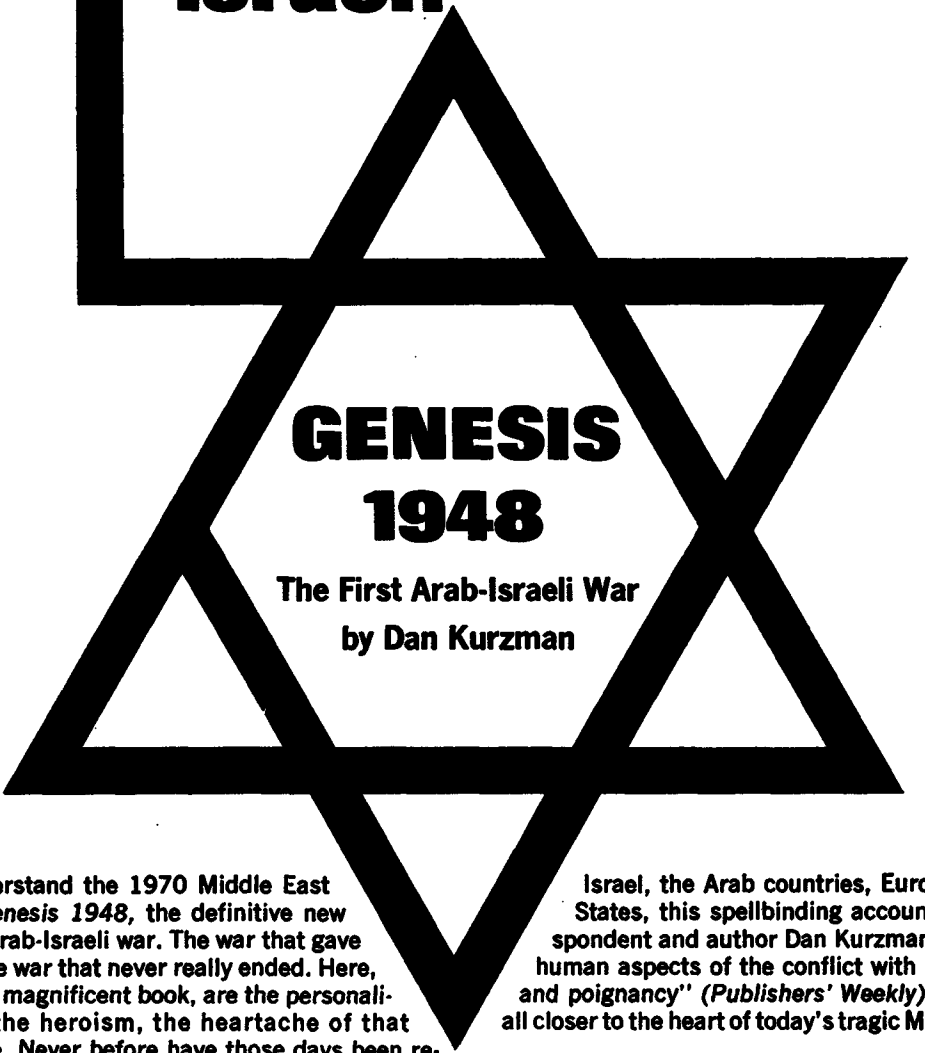
In that statement there is much of the essential Reinhart. And his essence is complexity. Young, "he had sought control over experience, basic to which was an escape from imposed rituals, like church, rigid political credos, and social biases. The object was not to repeat anything compulsively." Older, he is capable of advising an aging, conventionally attitudinizing teeny-bopper that "Human beings are vile. That's the best advice I can give you. Like any other general rule it has as many exceptions as applications, but it is a useful position from which to start." A little later on he acknowledges that "he habitually assumed the worst of others, and had furthermore done so for so many years that the process had by use become agreeable. He was comfortable in a world full of malice and corruption." Which is a way of saying that unlike the stock protagonist of fictions that laugh because they dare not weep over the inequities and evil of the world, Reinhart is anything but innocent and, though often victimized, by no means a natural-born victim. What he seeks, really, is freedom from his own concept of freedom, freedom from the old American myth of omnipotent individuality so that he can join the revel of corporate corruption with the rest of us.

Vital Parts is mainly concerned with the process by which he attains the desired goal. The process involves getting an old school chum, one Bob Sweet, to let him in on the ground floor of his Cryon Foundation, which may or may not have a method of deep-freezing ailing human beings, setting them aside for the length of time it requires to find a cure for whatever is wrong with them, and then thawing them out and repairing them, good as new. The trouble is that Sweet has need of Reinhart only as a kind of experimental prototype, the first man to be Birdseyed. The good thing is that hanging around Old Bob is like taking a short course in the new entrepreneurial style. Corseted, toupeed, every tooth in his mouth false, the better to prove the worth of a goat-gland treatment promising perpetual youth (in which he also has an interest), he hustles Cryonics on the network talk shows, jets around in his own plane, finances himself on credit, and dabbles, *à la mode*, in commodity futures, which Reinhart discovers are not, as advertised, bags of cocoa beans, but sacks of gravel.

BOB SWEET is a revelation to Reinhart and when, to get him to sign on as the Orville Wright of Cryonics, he offers him two weeks of self-creation—wig, mod clothes, a Jaguar XKE, the very hotel suite once occupied by Dwight D. Eisenhower—Sweet grants to Reinhart the peace that passeth all understanding. For the pleasure of material possession pales quickly on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Major Nasser chats with Captain Cohen. King Abdullah plots with Jews. Moshe Dayan captures a city. David Ben-Gurion names a country "Israel."



If you want to understand the 1970 Middle East crisis, start with *Genesis 1948*, the definitive new history of the first Arab-Israeli war. The war that gave birth to a nation. The war that never really ended. Here, in one monumental, magnificent book, are the personalities, the battles, the heroism, the heartache of that tumultuous struggle. Never before have those days been recorded in such vivid, dramatic detail. Based largely on hitherto secret documents and over a thousand interviews in Israel, the Arab countries, Europe and the United States, this spellbinding account by foreign correspondent and author Dan Kurzman "brings home the human aspects of the conflict with remarkable fidelity and poignancy" *(Publishers' Weekly)* . . . and brings us all closer to the heart of today's tragic Middle East impasse.

With 32 pages of photographs. $12.95

An NAL Book at all bookstores

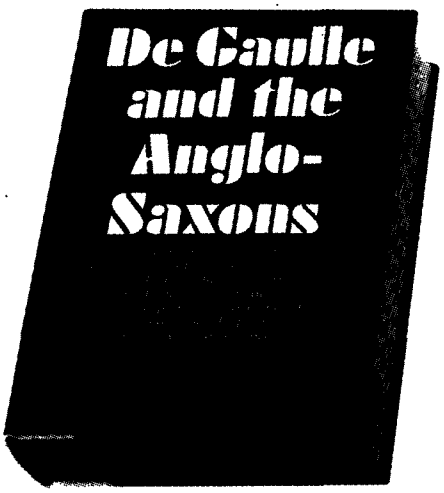
WORLD PUBLISHING
TIMES MIRROR

LICENSED TO GNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

idealistic Reinhart—he abandons the Jag in a matter of hours. The game, as he perhaps always suspected, is far richer than its material prizes. It is also easier to play than he thought, being mostly a matter of garb, of personal style. The paradox is that one must give up the more intimate aspects of individuality (Carlo's preferred crew cut and imitation Ivy League clothes) in order to achieve the dominance, the total freedom of movement, which the true individualist prizes above all else. These piddling sacrifices made, Carlo is made, and the book ends with Reinhart in effect saying to himself, "My God, is that all there was to it?"

Still, one has the distinct feeling Reinhart has indeed mastered the modern art of role playing, has finally perfected the ability to achieve self-transcendence at will, under pressure. The question left hanging over the final pages is whether his conversion is temporary or permanent—and perhaps there will be, in time, yet another Reinhart novel in which he is permitted to view middle America from above instead of below and from a point in time at which it has completed, as Reinhart now has, the present process of agonizing transition. But perhaps not. For vileness is vileness, and it is hard to imagine what Berger could add to his vision except some novel examples of the way men will, in the future, prove his basic point, which is that as we lose faith in our traditional individualism we seek, at every level of life, compensatory fantasies of power, of escape, of impractical idealism. Reinhart himself never quite completes this thought, but it is everywhere implicit in what he sees and hears and encounters—among blacks who fake elegance and militance to cover their confusion; in a psychiatrist who insists the moon shots are an attempt to impose a basic homosexual fantasy on us and thus disarm opposition to the military-industrial complex; in the concocted environments where the young seek to lose themselves (the discothèque in *Vital Parts* is called the Gastrointestinal System, and one imagines Berger is implying that they wish mostly to fly up their own ass-holes, as the vulgar phrase has so long had it).

But if Berger's theme is the devastation of the individualist ethic by the spirit of our time, it is important to stress that he suffers no nostalgia, either for the past or for the progressive future we once imagined in common. (In a satirical book review he wrote for a recent issue of *Esquire*, Berger has an astronaut glimpsing Mars close up for the first time and radioing: "Hey, Houston, them canals are full of condoms and rusty beer cans!") In the shifting landscape of Thomas Berger, man is constant, that is to say, hopelessly the prisoner of himself and his pathetically limited vision. All ideology, all hope of genuine change is false since, alas, "The 'public' is a collection of individuals though politicians pretend otherwise." That is the heart of his irony, and that is why his comedy is too bitter for general popularity, though not, in my opinion, too bitter to be called great (despite occasional lapses into archness, occasional strain in the purely slapstick passages). Under the cold, correct surface of his prose—which, employed to render absurdity, creates the fundamental tension of his work—lies one of the most genuinely radical sensibilities now writing novels in this country. Next to the devastation he wreaks in his quiet way, a public anarchist like Reinhart's fellow Cincinnatian, Jerry Rubin, seems pipsqueak indeed. *He* thinks there is hope; Carlo Reinhart and Thomas Berger know there is only the possibility of replacing present delusions with new ones.



"A very exciting and very important book...."*

JOHN NEWHOUSE, a journalist and former staff member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, has uncovered so much new material that even policy-makers are consulting his book to find out what really went on during the years when de Gaulle was a major force in Western political history.

DE GAULLE AND THE ANGLO-SAXONS is written with such elegance and authority that readers will immediately be caught up in the drama of diplomacy that still today affects U.S. policy decisions. Mr. Newhouse tells why France—in spite of a long history of amity—dislikes and mistrusts the U.S.; why, as we struggle with the legacy of de Gaulle, we need to understand this modern Machiavelli.

"A kind of intellectual thriller with nuclear weapons the object of the chase. ...Newhouse...has put together the pieces and what emerges is a brilliant study of 'crisis diplomacy' at its worst."
—JAMES CHACE, *N.Y. Times*

"Newhouse publishes some papers never in print before. Aware that still others are withheld from circulation, he has supplemented official lacunae with innumerable interviews and he speaks with unquestionable authority. This is not just history but drama ready-made for the stage."—*W. G. ROGERS,
Saturday Review Syndicate

De Gaulle and the Anglo-Saxons

At all bookstores $8.50

THE VIKING PRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hardtop Sedan deVille. Cadillac Motor Car Division

Isn't it time you stopped dreaming and started living? *The tradition of luxury, elegance and magnificence that first started you dreaming about owning the car of cars is more impressive than ever in the 1970 Cadillac. It is brilliantly distinctive in its styling and offers a wide array of comfort and handling advancements. It is designed for those who appreciate a wise investment in motoring pleasure. And you'll find that this is a particularly advantageous time for making Cadillac ownership a reality. Do it today . . . at your authorized dealer's. You'll wonder why you waited so long.*

Do it today...not "someday".

Cadillac
STANDARD OF THE WORLD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cutty people know.
Only one American in forty knows the taste of Cutty. But that's enough to make Cutty Sark America's best-selling Scotch. Join the Cutty people. Cutty people know.
ESTABLISHED IN THE XVII CENTURY
BERRY BROS & RUDD LTD LONDON
Distilled and Bottled in Scotland under British Government Supervision
CUTTY SARK
BLENDED SCOTS WHISKY
100% Scotch Whiskies from Scotland's best Distilleries
86 Proof
4/5 Quart
bottled by
BERRY BROS & RUDD LTD
3 St James's Street, London, SW1
Product of Scotland
America's No. 1 Scotch.
THE BUCKINGHAM CORPORATION, IMPORTERS • NEW YORK, N.Y. • DISTILLED AND BOTTLED IN SCOTLAND • BLENDED 86 PROOF

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED